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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

THIS special issue is devoted to a discussion of art objects as significant expressions of the civilizations that produced them. Professor George W. Elderkin suggested this symposium, which we titled "Art as Symbol." The contents were planned under his direction and he has acted in the capacity of special advisory editor for the issue. Professor Elderkin analyzes the validity of the theme as follows:

"The subject of symbolism in the monumental art of widely separated peoples and periods must contain many instructive contrasts of permanent value. For this reason the subject seemed to be suitable for an entire issue of *Art in America*. Professor Erwin Panofsky gave the subject sharper definition by suggesting that the several contributors to the theme limit themselves to a single work of art. Such limitation obviously has the great advantage of stressing concrete illustration in a subject which readily lends itself to intangible vagary. The fact that the several authors — each one an authority in the field under discussion — have not read one another's articles, will heighten the divergence not only of the national arts but of the scholars' treatment of the problem."



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ART AS SYMBOL

Introduction

SOME NOTES ON SYMBOLISM AND ALLEGORY

By FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.
Princeton University

THAT the work of art is inevitably a symbol is a justly respected basis of criticism. What is symbolized is, of course, the creative intention and activity of the maker. But suppose many artists are involved and the making, as often in great buildings, has run over centuries. The building will still symbolize all the processes of ideation and creation, but the symbolical meaning when with difficulty elucidated will lack coherence, may lack value. Imagine, for example, a true and inclusive account of the symbolical references of Westminster Abbey as it is today.

At the risk, then, of seeming less sponsor than Devil's Advocate for the present very interesting symposium, I must say that a building is generally a poor point of departure for the amateur of symbolism. In the recently demolished New York mansion of the late Senator Clark too elaborate and confusing a theme would present itself, while the discrimination between a Hicksite and Orthodox Meeting house would be a theme baffling from its apparent simplicity. In short, in considering a building as a symbol, it pays to choose your building carefully.

This Dr. Frankl has done in choosing Amiens, with a known architect, built in a limited time, at a salient moment of the middle ages. Possibly the late Dr. Coomaraswamy has chosen an even better part in generalizing his temple and thus making it cover a thousand temples. Mr. Hudnut in treating the contemporary R. C. A. building has the advantage of knowing all the surrounding circumstances, and, from their multiplicity, the difficulty of coordinating them. He is to be congratulated on his lucid exposition.

Doctor Hayes and Doctor Salmony share the advantage of dealing

with singularly static civilizations. Chinese and Egyptian civilizations have the convenience of staying put while the symbol-maker makes his symbols, and the student interprets them.

But the trouble with a building as symbol is that it is not very closely tied to any particular interpretation. Dr. Frankl might have emphasized the influence of the system-makers, say, Thomas Aquinas, on Amiens, or, with Mâle, that of such encyclopedists as Vincent of Beauvais. In short, the referents of such a cathedral as Amiens are almost infinite. Thus we are far from any A. B. C. of symbolism, rather in that delightful discursive realm which is criticism. In elucidating a building as so much symbolism, we are like an astronomer justifying the existence of the planet Saturn. There is a temptation to dwell too much on the famous rings, or, in the interest of simplicity, to ignore them.

There may be presumption in giving here what is merely a personal slant, for obviously I have no authority on symbolism. Yet, beginning with my first reading of Dante about fifty-five years ago and of Spenser's "Faerie Queen," well more than sixty, I have been interested in allegory, which may be looked at as a symbol dropsically watered and bloated. So here, shamelessly, is the slant for what it may be worth.

The briefest account of an authentic symbol seems to me that it is just a visual metaphor. The affinity between the metaphor and the thing or idea to which it attaches itself is simply exhibited by juxtaposition; it is never asserted or proved. The metaphor and the symbol stick or come loose by virtue of their own adhesiveness or lack thereof. No verbal "stickum" is of any use. The analogical relation is simple and self-subsistent.

For this reason the metaphor and the symbol are normally unitary and compact, whereas the affinity predicated or asserted in the simile can be and often is very extensive and complicated and has to be proved and checked. Consider here the famous Homeric similes.

The extended simile readily grows into allegory. The serial analogies proffered by allegory again have to be reiterated, checked and proved, unlike symbols which simply stand or fall as such, and cannot be nor need to be verified. Allegorical affinities call loudly for verification, else the allegory unrolls itself into flimsiness or even emptiness. So, though we have Hazlitt to the contrary, the allegory of the "Faerie Queene" will "bite" you if, as you should, you follow the poet in taking the poem seriously.

More concretely, any sort of cross or crucifix is primarily a symbol or reminder of the death of Jesus. The symbolic impact varies quantitatively according to the beholder's belief — is more poignant in, say, a Trinitarian

than in a Unitarian. If the cross, as frequently in Early Christian mosaics, is splendidly jewelled, that means to an orthodox believer the ineffable preciousness of the vicarious sacrifice; it means nothing much different, save in intensity, to an intelligent and sensitive Confucian or Brahman. If the cross, as is often the case, is in the form of a reliquary containing a relic of a martyr, the reference of the symbol has not essentially changed. The symbol has merely been enriched, as a musical theme may seem to be enriched by appropriate if hardly essential grace notes. Even if the enshrined relic be what is or is thought to be a splinter of the actual cross, the meaning of the symbol has been enriched and amplified only to a believer in sympathetic magic — extended, we may say, pragmatically.

So much for the simplicity and integrity of any true symbol. Of course such a view relegates much that is generally called symbolism to the far wider field of analogy and allegory. In the present symposium, symbolism has generally been taken in this broader sense. With this situation I have no quarrel, for the individual results of these studies are vitally interesting, and collectively they form a critical symposium of exceptional value to the student and the scholar.



Fig. 1. STATUE OF LADY SENEVY
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

EGYPTIAN SCULPTURE: A STATUE OF THE LADY SENEWY

By WILLIAM C. HAYES
Metropolitan Museum of Art

"... for the limits of art cannot be reached and no artist fully possesses his skill."¹

THE Vizier Ptah-hotpe was not being wistful, but merely stating a fact — a fact which, we may be sure, was accepted with the greatest complacency by his fellow countrymen. The dynastic Egyptian was far too busy garnering and enjoying the material blessings of life to disquiet himself over matters beyond his everyday experience and patently beyond his intellectual grasp. So long as his crops were large, his mines and quarries productive, his boundaries safe, his fishing good, and his beer strong, he was well content. He loathed snobbery, knew nothing of racial and religious intolerance, and worshipped with childlike devotion every divinity who came within his ken. War for its own sake was not to his liking and his foreign conquests were more a means of increasing his worldly possessions than the gratification of a lust for power. His shrewdness, industry, magnificent talent for organization, and infinite capacity for taking pains were tempered by a profound respect for established authority and ancient tradition and often hindered by an appalling susceptibility to primitive superstitions. Mentally uninquisitive, he borrowed rather than evolved his few simple sciences.

Even the ominous prospect of death failed to wring from the ancient Egyptian a moment's troubled speculation. It had long been established and was, in fact, as clear as a pikestaff that man's inner being is immortal and that the eternal life must obviously follow the familiar pattern of the mundane existence. Malicious spirits and other uncomfortable supernatural phenomena might, of course, be encountered; but these were easily disposed of by extensive selections of magical spells, which in later times also removed the necessity of maintaining a clean record of personal conduct. Food, drink, clothing, furniture, and other essential equipment were buried with the dead, and a continued supply of each item was assured by the establishment of funerary endowments in perpetuity.

The chief concern was that, with the disintegration of the body, the spirit might be deprived of a material form in which to dwell and manifest

¹From the Instruction of Ptah-hotpe, Papyrus Prisse, 5, 9. See Erman, *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, 56.

itself — a state of affairs which, to the Egyptian, was not merely horrifying, but quite incomprehensible. The embalmer naturally did all in his limited power to postpone the catastrophe; but the obvious solution of the problem was to provide the tomb with enduring reproductions of the deceased person, either carved in three dimensions in hardwood or stone, or executed in painting or relief on the walls of the funerary chapel. It was not long before the gregarious and luxury-loving Egyptian realized that, if his own spirit could be lured into inhabiting a graven or painted image, similar representations of the members of his household would enable him to enjoy their company and services in the Hereafter, and that the same, or a generally similar, notion could be expanded to include every phase and activity of a full and pleasant existence. As these beliefs were elaborated and gained universal acceptance the demand for tomb statues, reliefs, and paintings became such that the Egyptian artist found himself dedicated chiefly to the production of this class of monument. In other words, it is through what is somewhat lugubriously called their "funerary art" that we obtain our most frequent and most characteristic glimpses of the people of ancient Egypt.

It would be difficult to find a more typical or more charming example of Egyptian tomb sculpture than the gray granite statue of the Lady Senewy in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (illustrated).² When, about 1920 B. C., this statue was carved, the Middle Kingdom was nearing the height of its power and the civilization of dynastic Egypt was approaching the midpoint of its long development. Amun-em-het II of the Twelfth Dynasty was king of Egypt and Senewy's husband, Prince Djefay-Hapy of Siüt, was governor of the fortified trading post at Kermeh in the northern Sudan. It was at Kermeh that the statue was found, in the midst of a great Sudanese funeral mound, provided for the burial of the Egyptian official and his wife and containing also fragments of a similar statue of Djefay-Hapy himself. Round about lay the bodies of nearly three hundred attendants, strangled or buried alive on the day of the funeral — a strange and barbaric setting for a lady of the Middle Kingdom, but one which her Hamitic ancestors of prehistoric times would have found altogether natural.

The statue itself, whether made at Kermeh or brought thither from Egypt, was, of course, the work of an Egyptian sculptor, who may have received his training in one of the royal ateliers, established by the kings

²Museum of Fine Arts, 14.720. Height 168 cm. (5½ ft.). Reisner, *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, XIII (1915), 74, fig. 5; *Harvard African Studies*, VI (1923), 34-5, 509, pl. 31, fig. 343; Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein* (1929), pl. 24; Smith, *Ancient Egypt* (1942), 81-2, fig. 49; Hoyningen-Huene and Steindorff, *Egypt* (1945), 71.



Fig. 2. HEAD OF LADY SENEWY (detail)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

of the Twelfth Dynasty in the region of Memphis. The influence of the Memphite tradition, as exemplified in the serene and noble works of the Old Kingdom, is apparent in the restrained and highly conventionalized treatment of the figure. Somewhat less conventional is the broad and pleasant face, with its wide mouth, fine, slightly aquiline nose, and high, prominent cheekbones — features strongly reminiscent of the contemporary royal portraits of the Twelfth Dynasty. Surely, too, there is a slenderness, a quality of elegance about this Middle Kingdom statue which seems to forecast the graceful artistic style of the New Kingdom, some four centuries later.

It is difficult not to be impressed by the superb manual dexterity of the sculptor who, with the few primitive tools at his disposal and by the simplest and most direct of methods, created this exquisitely finished work from a rough block of hard gray stone. It is equally difficult for the modern mind to understand why, with unlimited technical ability at his command and powers of observation, which we know were of the keenest, he and his predecessors had not progressed in over a thousand years beyond an elementary stage of artistic development. The answer to this and other questions associated with ancient Egyptian art requires only an elaboration of our introductory remarks on the people of ancient Egypt.

It is doubtful if the anonymous craftsmen employed by the well-to-do farmers of the lower Nile Valley ever thought of themselves as "artists" in the modern sense of the word, or their work as a means of projecting their own egos or developing their own theories. They approached the problem of making a good statue with the same lack of self-consciousness that their fellow craftsman, the carpenter, approached the task of making a good chair. Their work was primarily functional and utilitarian, and was designed and executed solely to meet the requirements of their patrons.

In the tomb statue under consideration what was required was a representation of the Lady Senewy, sufficiently naturalistic to serve as a convincing substitute for her body, yet of sufficiently permanent and intransitory nature to endure and remain valid throughout "the length of eternity." Fortunately for the sculptor, the degree of realism expected by an Egyptian client of the Twentieth Century B. C. was modest enough to permit him to achieve these two not altogether compatible goals to the complete satisfaction of all concerned.

The statue is less an individual portrait than it is a gigantic hieroglyphic symbol for "seated lady." This is particularly true of the figure, including — we may hope for Senewy's sake — the exaggeratedly heavy legs and

enormous feet. As a work designed expressly to be forever concealed in a tomb, what portrait qualities it possesses were intended to be seen and recognized only by the spirit of the woman whom it represents — and by no one else. This is an important consideration in assessing the extent and type of realism attempted in tomb sculpture of this class. It is, of course, not true that the ancient Egyptian was incapable of attaining a greater degree of naturalism than that seen here, and it is probably equally untrue that, as frequently asserted, he never used a model, but worked entirely from memory and represented parts of the human body only "as he knew them to be." The first assumption is contradicted by scores of portrait heads executed with complete and often pitiless realism; the second, by a series of sketches obviously made from life, and by what our commonsense should tell us regarding the methods employed by artists of all periods of the world's history. There can be little doubt that in the present instance and in many others like it the Egyptian sculptor placed an intentional restraint upon his talents as a portraitist in deference to the nature and purpose of his commission.

The identity of the owner of the statue was established, not by individual traits of face or figure, but, quite simply and effectively, by repeating the name and title of Senewy many times in the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the sides and top of the base. In each case the deceased lady is referred to as under the tutelage of a god or goddess, traditionally associated with the protection of the dead. In the art of the ancient Near East such inscriptions were not merely incidental labels, but functional and integral parts of the composition of almost every important monument. In Egypt the inevitable loss of aesthetic effect which, to our eyes, results from applying writing to the surfaces of a work of art, was considerably lessened by the highly decorative character of the hieroglyphic script and by the care with which the inscriptions were composed and distributed on the monuments. Here, for example, the texts on the sides of the throne are not only aesthetically inoffensive, but form a rather attractive ornamental pattern. From the late New Kingdom we do find cartouches and other short inscriptions written on the figures themselves; but such examples of bad taste are rare in the art of dynastic Egypt.

The quality of permanency, of everlasting stability which this statue possesses stems chiefly from its studied simplicity. The static, frontal pose, adopted for tomb and temple statues as early as the Second Dynasty, was found to be so appropriate to this class of figure that it was retained unaltered throughout the ensuing three millenniums of Egyptian history. It

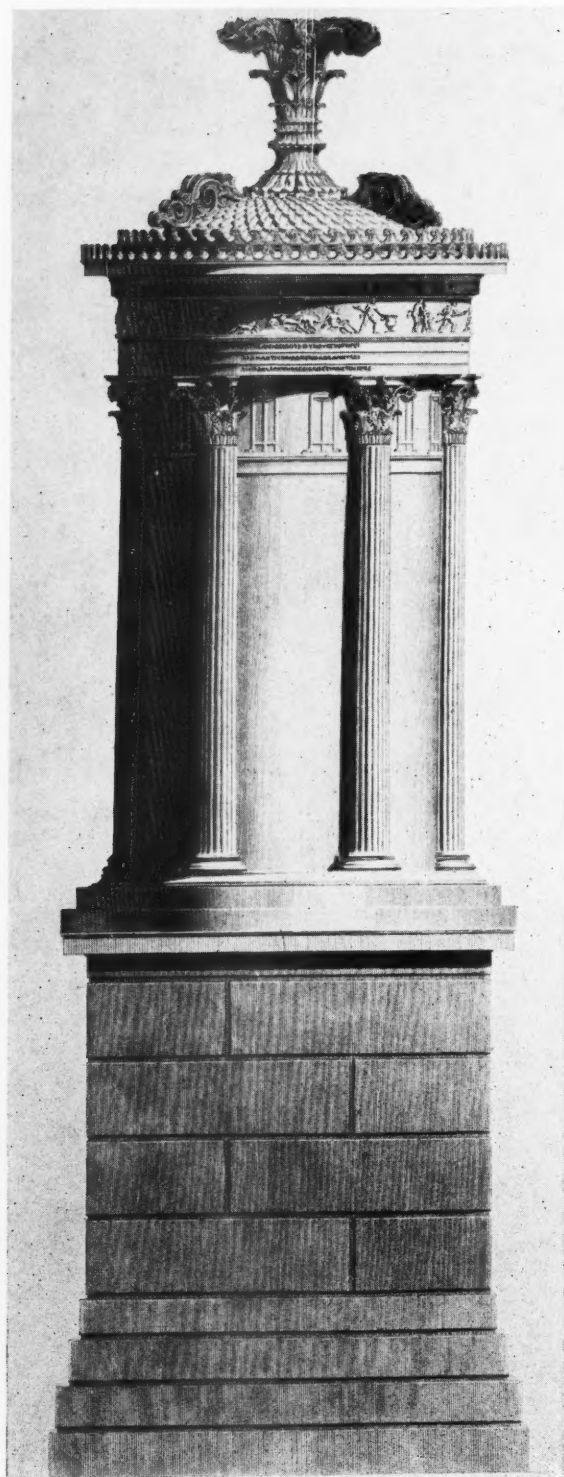
has been remarked that, as a general rule in Egyptian funerary art, a human being is represented either because he is somebody or because he is *doing* something. In the tomb models and reliefs the figures of the anonymous servants, farmhands, entertainers, and the like are represented in a great variety of active and often complicated poses, whereas the principal figure, that of the tomb owner, more often than not stands or sits in dignified immobility, gazing dreamily into eternity and doing nothing. In the case of the latter no momentary relaxation of the architectural pose, no gesture or action suggests a definite time, place, or circumstance, no facial expression betrays a passing mood or temporary emotion. Even the clothing and accessories tend to be of archaic type and therefore endowed with a curious timelessness — like the angelic robes of Biblical origin in which our forefathers confidently expected to enter Heaven. By the Middle Kingdom the several traditional types of funerary figure had probably acquired magical significance, which would account in part for their almost exact reproduction over and over again. It was not, however, through either superstition or “conservatism” (whatever that may mean!) that these types continued to be employed; but simply because they fulfilled with complete satisfaction the unchanging requirements of the Egyptian tomb owner.

Above all, the statue is the monumental expression of an ideal. This is Senewy — and every Egyptian woman — as she would want to be and remain always. Here is neither the fat, wrinkled old lady of the years preceding her death nor the shriveled mummy of the centuries following; but a young woman, slender, beautiful, and very much alive. Poise and dignity are in the lithe, straight figure. Loyalty, humor, tolerance, and kindness are clearly written in the pleasant and handsome face. No lock is out of place in the long, graceful wig. No wrinkles mar the simple dress, no streaks spoil the delicate effect of the eye cosmetic. In Senewy's right hand the flower of the blue lotus is forever fresh.

In striving to satisfy his client the Egyptian sculptor has unconsciously summarized in visible form the ideas and ideals of a great nation of the ancient Near East and of a great era in the early history of the world. The content of his work bespeaks the genial and graceful spirit of an essentially simple and thoroughly charming people. Its form reflects the laws and conventions which were necessary to a civilization so early, so isolated, and so highly organized as that of ancient Egypt. Of this statue the Egyptian himself would have said that it possesses the qualities of “goodness” and “exactitude” — expressions which we have no difficulty in recognizing as the counterparts of our more abstract notions of “beauty” and “truth.”

The precise difference in point of view implied by the two modes of expression is perhaps our most valuable clue to an understanding of Egyptian art and culture. The extent to which we agree with the ancient Egyptian's estimate of his own works should be our principal criterion for accepting or rejecting his culture as an important milestone in world civilization.

CHOREGIC MONUMENT
OF LYSICRATES
(with restorations by
Stuart and Revett)
Athens, Greece



A GREEK STRUCTURE: THE CHOREGIC MONUMENT OF LYSICRATES

By GEORGE W. ELDERKIN
Princeton University

THE monument erected by Lysicrates at Athens in the year 335-34 B. C. which commemorated his victory in a contest of dithyrambic choruses is here reconsidered in an effort to show that a unified symbolism underlay both its form and decoration and that this symbolism was appropriately Dionysiac. The unusual form of the monument, which consists of a square podium 13 feet high and a superimposed circular structure of the Corinthian order, the whole rising to a height of about 35 feet, was not merely an ornate pedestal for a prize tripod (illustration). In the fourth century the Greek sculptor sometimes made the external support or the pedestal of a statue localize the deity he represented. Thus Praxiteles leaned his statue of Hermes against a tree-trunk to show that the god is in the woods. The unknown sculptor of the Victory of Samothrace placed his statue upon a pedestal which takes the form of the prow of a ship to indicate that the victory commemorated was gained upon the sea. Similar but more subtle conceptions seem to have inspired the Athenian artist who conceived the choregic monument of Lysicrates.

Since the monument was built to support a tripod which was a prize for the victor in a contest of Dionysiac dithyramps one may logically seek in the tripod and the dithyramb reasons for the choice of its form and decoration. The two customary places in Athens for the dedication of a tripod were the street of tripods, where Lysicrates set up his, and the Pythion. In the latter place the tripod commemorated a victory in contests of lyric poetry during the Thargelia, a festival in honor of Apollo and Artemis. The name Pythion reveals a close connection of this sanctuary with that of Apollo at Delphi where the god had the title of Pythios. The competing choruses of the Pythion danced around the altar of Apollo. Their dances were circular as were those of the dithyrambic choruses in the theatre. These two circular dances with identical prizes for the victors reflect the close association of Dionysus with Apollo at Delphi and again in the theatre at Athens where the interpreter of the Pythian oracle sat on the immediate right of the priest of Dionysus Eleuthereus. Both dances may have been around the tripod for which the choruses contended, a position corresponding to that of rivals in athletic and martial contests in

Athenian and Etruscan painting between whom are set the prizes. It is quite possible that the dances were rites of revocation as was that of the Delphic youths who danced around a tripod and called upon Apollo to return from the Hyperboreans. The dithyrambic chorus in the orchestra of the theatre at Athens may have called upon Dionysus to come from within the earth, as he could easily have done in the theatre at Eretria where a subterranean passage led to the center of its orchestra.¹ This conjecture receives some support from the season of the year, the end of March just as the spring was beginning, when the dithyramb was presented. For this season suggests that the singing of the dithyramb was in origin a fertility-rite intended to summon from the earth the vegetation personified as a renascent Dionysus. In the list of victors of the City Dionysia the contests were recorded always in the same order and presumably in the order of presentation — first the dithyrambic, then the comic and finally the tragic² but Pickard-Cambridge rejects such significance for the sequence. The dithyramb, in origin at least, commemorated the sufferings of Dionysus, i. e. his death. Then came the renascence of the god in the spring which was celebrated with the rejoicing and license that crystallized into comedy. Since tragedy developed out of the dithyramb it was added after the original two performances in the list of victors.

A tradition of special significance is that Dionysus was the first to sit upon the tripod and prophesy.³ When and whence did he come to do so? The Delphians believed that the remains of Dionysus were buried beside their oracle,⁴ i. e. the tripod upon which the priestess sat when she made oracular responses. Apparently the god immediately after rising from the tomb seated himself upon the tripod to reveal the knowledge which he had brought from the underworld. An attractive theory identifies the Delphic tripod with that in which the Titans boiled the pieces of the body of Dionysus.⁵ The tripod thus logically acquired sepulchral significance and was consequently placed upon the omphaloid tomb of Glaukos, the son of the Cretan Minos, in an Athenian vase painting which shows the boy restored to life by the seer Polyeidios.⁶

The theory that the tripod of the choregic monument was a symbol of

¹On such passages see Pickard-Cambridge's revision of Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, pp. 109-10.

²*Ibid.*, p. 9, n. 5; cf. pp. 23-24. *I. G.* II,² no. 2318.

³Schol., Pindar, *Pyth.*, argum. A.

⁴Plut., *De Is. et Osir.*, 365A.

⁵Cook, *Zeus* II, p. 218. For a contrary opinion see Reisch in Roscher, *Lexikon s. v.* Dreifuss, col. 1684. The Delphic tripod stood in the *adyton* of the temple near the *hestia* (*Hymn. in Apoll.*, 265). One is reminded of the caldron of regeneration in the myth of Pelias when Medea boiled the pieces of an old ram in a caldron and produced a lamb.

⁶Murray, *White Athenian Vases*, pl. VI.

great significance does not imply that every prize tripod had symbolic value. It began its career as a cooking pot and must have retained its prosaic character in many dedications.⁷ The tripod which the victor received in the chariot race in honor of the dead Patroclus need not have been a symbol of mystic significance but such it may well have been on the omphaloid tomb of Glaucus in the vase painting cited. That a prize in athletic contests sometimes had special or appropriate meaning is shown by the amphoras of olive oil which the victors in the Panathenaic contests received. The oil certainly alluded to the olive tree which the goddess Athena produced in her victorious contest with Poseidon, the more so since the Panathenaic contests probably commemorated that victory. Her protégé Erechtheus established the festival in her honor and shared in the victory over Poseidon by receiving sacrifice at his altar. The fact that the tripod was awarded at the Athenian Dionysia to the successful choregus of the dithyramb as a tribal prize and not to the victors in comedy and tragedy, although tragedy developed out of the dithyramb, shows the importance of the latter.

The sepulchral associations of the tripod at Delphi where Dionysus arose from the dead, and the Delphic Apollo's close ties with the theatre at Athens where the tripod was awarded as a prize to the chorus which best commemorated the passion of the god made of it a very logical symbol of the god's death and return to life.⁸ The monument which Lysicrates erected was conceived probably as a cenotaph of the god. Its two chief components, a podium and a surmounting circular cella are curiously matched in the great mausoleum of Hadrian at Rome.⁹ The significance of this correspondence becomes evident in the light of the deification of Hadrian at Athens as (Dionysus) Eleuthereus. The priest of Hadrian Eleuthereus occupied a marble seat in the front row of its theatre. This title Eleuthereus apparently was never used of Zeus who was called Eleutherius. At Athens Hadrian also bore the title of "Son of Zeus Eleutherius," and in keeping with his divine sonship was honored with a statue which stood beside one of Zeus Eleutherius before the Stoa Basileios in the agora.¹⁰ The devotion of Hadrian to Dionysus was probably patterned after that of Alexander the Great. It is reflected in the cult of the emperor's favorite Antinous who was represented several times in paintings at Mantinea as Dionysus.¹¹ His rites there included an annual *telete* which may have been an *epiphaneia* such as Demetrios of Phaleron celebrated for his slain brother.¹²

⁷On the tripod cf. Benton, *B. S. A.*, XXXV (1934-35) pp. 74ff. and 114.

⁸Cf. the author's *Archaeological Papers* VIII, p. 14.

⁹For the details of the mausoleum see Platner-Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, pp. 336-8.

¹⁰Paus., I, 3, 2.

¹¹*Idem*, VIII, 9, 7-8.

¹²Athen., 542e-f.

The correspondence of the monument of Lysicrates and the mausoleum of Hadrian in the superposition of a drum upon a high square base does not mean that the latter was influenced by the former but rather that both monuments have a common tradition behind them which may have reached Rome by way of Etruria. If this derivation is correct the type of structure may still be Dionysiac since the Etruscans migrated from Lydia, "the fatherland of Dionysus."¹³ The Dionysiac dithyramb was probably of Phrygian origin,¹⁴ and could thus have been at home in neighboring Lydia. The interest of the Lydian Gyges in Delphi may mean that in the early seventh century the cult of Dionysus there was either Lydian or appealed strongly to the Lydians. Croesus continued this interest in the oracle. The theory that the monument of Lysicrates and the mausoleum of Hadrian were each conceived as a tomb of Dionysus recalls the tradition that Zeus built a temple as a tomb for his son, appointing Silenus as priest.¹⁵ The presence on the roof of the mausoleum of a garden may have been an allusion to the title Erikapaïos or Erikepaïos of Dionysus as the god "of the early garden."¹⁶ If this is the correct interpretation of the appellative it would be explained by a passage in Minucius Felix: "All nature suggests a future resurrection . . . the flowers die and revive . . . We must await the spring-time of the body."¹⁷ Similar conceptions underlay the germinating Osiriac figures of earth which were placed in tombs of the XVIIIth dynasty in Egypt.¹⁸

If the monument of Lysicrates was in effect a miniature temple-tomb, its presence together with other choregic monuments on the Street of Tripods gave this street the character of a street of tombs like that in the Ceramicus. Approximately contemporary with the Lysicratean dedication were the sarcophagi of the Mourning Women and of Alexander which by taking the form of temples deified their occupants. The unknown Athenian sculptors of these sarcophagi may have derived their idea from the tradition of a temple-tomb of Dionysus. The Dionysiac and Delphic character of the Lysicratean monument is confirmed by the acanthus column at Delphi of the third century which supported a tripod at its top. This tripod rested upon acanthus leaves just as did that of Lysicrates. In addition the shaft had clusters of acanthus at intervals, the very repetition of

¹³Euripides, *Bacchae* 464. On the Lydian origin of the Etruscans see How and Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus* I, p. 376.

¹⁴Cf. Aristotle, *Politica* 1342b.

¹⁵Firminus Maternus, *De Erroribus*, VI, 4-5.

¹⁶For other conjectures as to the meaning of this appellative see Cook, *Zeus* II, p. 1025.

¹⁷*Octavius* 34, 11-12.

¹⁸Moret, *Mystères Égyptiens*² (1922) p. 41.

which emphasized its significance. That the acanthus shaft was symbolic is further indicated by the columns of the funeral car of Alexander the Great on which the acanthus reached from the middle almost to the capitals.¹⁹ Further evidence of the sepulchral symbolism of the plant is its presence on the grave stelae depicted on the white-ground Athenian lecythi which were especially painted for the dead as Aristophanes tells us. The symbolism of the acanthus may be inferred from the use of teasels in laceration of the human body in Lydia where Dionysus was the national god. Croesus had Pantaleon dragged over teasels until he died.²⁰ A thorny plant could thus become a symbol of death by laceration. Dionysus had met death by laceration at the hands of the Titans.

On the monument of Lysicrates the acanthus of the capitals of the columns is repeated in the finial and this unifying repetition is reinforced by the repetition of the tripod, the second of the mystic symbols. The tripods of the frieze were summed up in the bronze tripod which once crowned the monument and was its *raison d'être*. The distribution of the tripods, two in each intercolumniation, may have alluded to the two which were awarded at the City Dionysia as prizes for the two dithyrambic contests, the one of boys and the other of men. Lysicrates won a tripod for his tribe with a chorus of boys as is recorded in the inscription on his monument. It is possible that the chorus of boys owed its existence to the fact that Dionysus suffered death while a boy, this being the original theme of the dithyramb.

The frieze of tripods crowns the wall of the miniature pseudo-peripteral temple. Above it comes another frieze, in its normal place in the Corinthian entablature, the subject of which appropriately relates to the beardless or youthful Dionysus. The god, his sileni and satyrs are attacked by pirates while on their way by sea to Delphi. There is a difference of opinion as to the destination of the god at this time but the depiction on an Athenian vase-painting of the fourth century of the arrival of Dionysus and his sileni at Delphi where they are received by Apollo²¹ favors the assumption that the frieze represented the thiasus on its way to Delphi where Dionysus was so important as to have been represented in a gable of its oracular temple. It was at Delphi that Dionysus was buried and returned to life and where he was the first to sit upon the tripod. The unique scene of the frieze may therefore have represented the voyage of Dionysus to this shrine which was important in the traditions relating to him, the more so since

¹⁹Diodorus XVIII, 27, 2. The capitals of the shafts were Ionic. *Idem*, 26, 6.

²⁰Herodotus I, 92.

²¹Roscher, *Omphalos*, pl. II, nos. 2; cf. my *Archaeological Papers* VIII, p. 46, fig. 13a.

above the frieze was a Delphic tripod. If this interpretation is true the monument of Lysicrates presents a remarkably unified symbolism. The structure was a cenotaph of Dionysus which was crowned with the symbols of his death and resurrection, the acanthus and the tripod, and decorated with a frieze representing his voyage to the scene of the second of these significant events. The unique form of the monument which was erected soon after Philip's defeat of the Greeks at Chaeronea may have been a concession to Macedonian cult of the Lydian Dionysus.

In supplementary discussion of the frieze it may be noted that the scene is so composed that the youthful beardless Dionysus appears at its center as determined by the dedicatory inscription just below. This coincidence in the absence of a door determines the orientation of the monument. One who approached it with the figure of Dionysus in view could pass either to the right or left and see essentially the same struggle.²² A corresponding duplication serving the same purpose is seen in the north and south friezes of the Parthenon. The reclining Dionysus of the Lysicratean frieze is an adaptation of the Dionysus of the east gable of the same temple. The former is beardless as are appropriately the two satyrs on either side of him. Beyond these, one or two satyrs are interspersed with sileni. A corresponding transition is effected in the same way at the north end of the east frieze of the Parthenon.²³ Dionysus and the three figures on either side of him present a striking contrast to the lively struggle in the rest of the frieze. This reposeful group gives the quiet relaxation of the entire thiasus before the arrival of the pirates. Thyrsus, torch and craters of wine show that a revel was about to begin when the sudden attack occurred. Another example of the same contrast and the same violation of time is the scene of the sudden seizure of the Leucippidae by the Dioscuri on the Athenian hydria by the Meidias painter, a vase which was painted at Athens about seventy years before the erection of the monument of Lysicrates. In the scene one of the companions of the maidens continues to pluck berries from a bush serenely unaware of the seizure.

The choice of the subject for the frieze merits a moment's consideration. Why should Dionysus have been represented in an encounter with pirates? Perhaps a contemporary event may answer the question. This was the despatch by the Athenians of one Diotimus to rid the sea of pirates in the very year that Lysicrates erected his choregic monument. A decree passed in honor of Diotimus the following year, possibly in the theatre of Diony-

²²This symmetry is analyzed by DeCou, *A. J. A.*, 1893, pp. 46-47.

²³Murray, *Sculptures of the Parthenon*, pl., figures 49-53. The idea of placing a frieze at the top of the cella wall may have been borrowed from the Parthenon.

sus, led Schweigert to the conclusion that Diotimus had successfully performed his mission.²⁴ Lysicrates was the son of Lysithides who was a trierarch²⁵ and his naval service may have been a reason for the choice of subject for the frieze but it was quite in keeping with the traditions of Greek art to commemorate the defeat of the pirates in terms of the defeat of their prototypes by Dionysus and his followers.

The monument of Lysicrates presents a striking contrast to the later choregic dedications which Nicias and Thrasyllus erected at Athens. The Doric order of the Nicias monument must have been inspired by the Doric temple of Dionysus which stood close to the theatre where the dithyramb was performed. In and around this temple and its earlier companion, prize tripods were set up while some of them may have served as acroteria. The Nicias monument seems then to have been quite in keeping with local Athenian tradition whereas the novel form of the Lysicratean was an abrupt departure from that tradition. The change may have been due to the political upheaval which followed the defeat of the Athenians by Philip and his Macedonians at Chaeronea in the year 338, four years before Lysicrates recorded his victory. Perhaps the innovation was a concession to the Macedonian cult of Dionysus. It is a significant coincidence that another round building was erected within the sacred precinct of Zeus at Olympia which bore the name of Philippeum and contained statues of Philip, his father, and Alexander the Great. Some decades later another Macedonian sacred round building was erected on the island of Samothrace by Arsinoë, the daughter of Ptolemy I.²⁶ It was dedicated to the Cabiri whose Dionysiac character is well attested. Clearly a good case can be made out for the Macedonian use of the circular shrine, and such the monument of Lysicrates certainly seems to have been.

The significance of these dithyrambic monuments is enhanced by the absence of corresponding commemorations of victories in tragic and comic contests of the Athenian theatre. This fact probably reflects the deeper mysticism of the dithyramb which seems to have grown in its appeal as the national cults declined in the fourth century. If at this time the mystic cults had meant little, Demetrius Poliorcetes would not have requested that he be initiated into both the greater and the lesser Eleusinian mysteries

²⁴*Hesperia*, 1940, p. 341.

²⁵*I. G.*, II, 1629, 1.45. I owe the reference to Professor Raubitschek.

²⁶Conze, Hauser and Niemann, *Samothrace*, p. 85, n. 2, fig. 36, illustrate a miniature round building with an attached colonnade about its upper half which serves as a *cista* in a scene of a sepulchral banquet represented in relief upon a tombstone. The monument was found in Cyzicus. The form reminds one of the monument of Lysicrates and the scene suggests a sepulchral significance for the *cista*. This confirms the sepulchral connotation here proposed for the choregic monument in question.

at once, a violation of customary procedure such as never before had occurred. The increasing popularity of the mystic cult was due in part certainly to the rise of individualism. Philosophy began its efforts to make man self-sufficient in this world while the cults guaranteed to their initiates happiness in the world to come. This emphasis on the well-being of the individual was accompanied by realistic portraiture and its logical concomitant, the depiction of man's environment. The close interest of the Hellenistic world in man reached its acme in the assurance given to the Orphic devotee that he would be god instead of mortal and thus share the experience of Dionysus *redivivus*. It was this god whom the monument of Lysicrates commemorated.



MOSAIC FROM A VILLA AT HEMSWORTH, DORSET
British Museum, London

A ROMAN MOSAIC: BRITISH MUSEUM, NUMBER 33

By LOUISE A. HOLLAND
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THE mosaic pavements which occur in all parts of the Roman Empire are called "Roman," but the term has only a chronological significance in the East, where in Hellenistic times the technique, already old, had been brought to exquisite perfection.¹ The splendid examples in Antioch on the Orontes² might well have existed if the Romans had never set foot in Asia. The humbler British pavements, on the other hand, are truly Roman, since their existence is explained only by the fact that Romanized Britains or actual immigrants from Italy were living there, and living as far as possible in the Roman fashion. That the technique was a bor-

¹Hinks, *Catalogue of Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Paintings in the British Museum*, Introduction. Blake, *Memoirs American Academy in Rome*, Vol. VIII. Waterman, *Mosaics*.

²Morey, *Mosaics of Antioch*.

rowed one makes it, paradoxically, more genuinely their own. Mosaics furnish only one of many instances in which the ancient Italians enthusiastically adopted the product of another people's genius and made it a part of their own system of life. It was probably from Ptolemaic Egypt that the use of mosaic floors first came to Italy³ where their appeal was strong for many reasons. The work not only offered possibilities of warm, rich color, but it was sunfast and waterproof, and laid with an eye to permanence which charmed the long-term investor. The specifications for a mosaic floor⁴ are strikingly like those for laying a Roman road: the difference is in scale, the product in both cases well-nigh imperishable. That it was expensive made it a symbol of success such as the Romans were not reluctant to display; that the patterns were often copies of famous Greek paintings or mosaics allayed the feeling of cultural inferiority which had beset the Romans from their first contact with the Greeks and prompted them to appropriate what they could not create. They show no sign of being offended by the monstrous idea of displaying a picture on the floor, where it might be seen upside down, or end on, or at best hideously foreshortened. As with modern collectors, the carpet patterns and conventional designs so much more appropriate to their uses were far less prized than the more intricate, laborious, and expensive pictures. The apse or niche seen from only one point of view frees the pictured pavement from some, though not all, of its disadvantages.

In the case of some of the finest Italian specimens (and one differs from another as a hooked rug from a Cluny tapestry) it is hard to say whether the mosaic was imported ready made, or whether the artist had come to the country bringing his skill with him. The difficulties of transport do not apply to smaller pictures (*emblemata*) laid on tiles or stone trays.⁵ These could easily be brought from abroad and set by Italian artisans in the pavements of coarser workmanship with which they were surrounded. The demand for mosaics was constant and not confined to those who could afford imported luxuries. Competent craftsmen were trained, and throughout the imperial epoch mosaic floors were a standard feature of Roman public buildings and of houses both in town and country. Of these floors some were hastily executed in unpretentious patterns of black and white, and some were sumptuous polychrome compositions in the autumnal tones imposed by the color range in the available marble, and even in rarer instances made more brilliant by cubes of colored glass.

In the second half of the third century when Rome was already shaken

³Waterman, *op. cit.* page 40.

⁴Vitruvius VII. 1.

⁵Blake, *op. cit.* page 142.

and when the neighboring province of Gaul was suffering disasters, Roman Britain was entering upon a golden age of prosperity.⁶ It was a time when it was fortunate to be on the outermost rim of the world. Country estates multiplied in the southern lowlands.⁷ A sense of security and stability is reflected in the well built houses with stone foundations for their timbered walls. Not only in the towns but in the undefended countryside the proprietors were sufficiently confident of the future to build for their children's children. They could not foretell that the following century would see the ruin of all their work at the hands of barbarian raiders who were already making the first moves against the west coast. In the plans of their houses alien influences are apparent, for they lack the atrium and the colonnaded court so characteristic of Italy; and for building material, at least in the superstructure, the abundant timber of the island largely supplanted the brick and stucco of the old country. The interior arrangements show something Roman in the baths and in the hypocausts by which some of the rooms were warmed. It is especially in the decoration, however, that the British Roman asserts his nationality. It has been lamented that hardly a trace of the fresh and lively Celtic art survived the Roman influence with its determined traditionalism.⁸ The patterns of the painted walls and of the mosaic floors are the stock patterns of the Roman world, patterns for the most part derived from Hellenistic prototypes and so long in use that their themes give us no help in dating them.

The mosaic here illustrated comes from a villa at Hemsworth near Wimborne in Dorset. The builder of this house like his prosperous neighbors derived his income from his farm and grazing lands. When he planned his establishment to suit his means and position there were probably regular commercial channels through which he could obtain patterns for his rooms and corridors, perhaps from some British atelier⁹ like those at Cirencester or London, if not direct from overseas. There was no lack of clever British artisans¹⁰ to execute the designs and even to adapt them if necessary for the use of local materials. For an apsidal room he selected a Birth of Venus—a horseshoe-shaped panel with a plain outside border strip of red to make easy any necessary adjustment in the final dimensions. Upon a white background the panel shows the goddess balancing on a fluted shell, her red scarf or cloak fluttering behind her. The pavement is now damaged in such

⁶Haverfield, *Romanization of Roman Britain*, page 77. Ward, *Roman Era in Britain*, page 9.

⁷Kendrick and Hawkes, *Archaeology in England and Wales 1914-1931*, pages 260ff. Collingwood, *Archaeology of Roman Britain*, Chap. VII.

⁸*Romans in Britain*, page 8.

⁹Morgan, *Romano-British Pavements*, pages 80, 176.

¹⁰Ward, *op. cit.* page 10. Haverfield, *op. cit.* page 77.

a way that the head and torso of the figure are lost, but enough remains to show that the tesserae were set in curving lines to follow the contours of the nude white body, and that the shading was carried out, as in the flutings of the shell, in a gray stone of local origin. The lower border hides the hinge of the shell and cuts across the ankles of the goddess, perhaps to avoid the difficulty of representing the foreshortened feet. Two red and gray ivy leaves appear as space fillers in the field, and the ivy motif reappears in an ornamental band below the picture. A series of borders surrounds the panel, wave pattern, cable, and braided guilloche. Then as if to compensate for the lack of attendants on Venus, gray and black dolphins, mullets, and limpets appear in a white border as symbols of her element. Though the dolphins balance, with one at the top and two on each side, the design is not exactly symmetrical as one would expect in run-of-the-mill Roman work. These dolphins have sadly degenerated from the clean and splendid creatures of archaic Greek art; the corkscrew twist of their bodies suggests an unpleasant lack of substance; but the foliate form of the tail would please the Celtic mind that delighted to merge animal and floral forms. It is possible that the panel, like so many mosaic designs, is a debased copy of a Hellenistic painting. It cannot be the Apelles picture of which Pliny tells us (N. H. XXXV. 36), for in that composition Aphrodite was not wafted on the shell, but was in the act of rising out of the water.

What religious meaning such representations would have for the people who passed and repassed them daily is a question. It seems probable that in all the British pavements the chief interest was in their decorative value. Professor Haverfield may well have been right in his judgment that the Orpheus scene was popular in Britain, not for any mystic significance, but "because it included various quaint animals."¹¹ It is easy to see that the Hemsworth subject would be pleasing to people who lived near the beautiful Dorsetshire coast and the sea which represented for them the roadway to the great world from which came all desirable things. There is no element in the design that does not belong to the old Mediterranean repertory, the theme of Venus rising from the sea, the cable and guilloche borders, the wave pattern, the marine creatures. It was all a reminder to the occupants of the villa that their country was a part of the Roman world, that they themselves were Romans, living as Romans would continue to live, in peace and confidence in their own ways. This was a part of their inheritance like the Latin language. Its very lack of novelty, its nostalgic adherence to the traditional form, made it a token of the steadfastness of Rome and of the eternal quality of what they hoped would endure forever.

¹¹*Op. cit.* page 45, note 1.

A CHINESE BRONZE: AN EARLY WESTERN CHOU VESSEL

By ALFRED SALMONY
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TO typify by a single art object one of the greatest civilizations of the world, produced by a diversified people over one of the longest periods of history, may seem a hazardous undertaking. For China such a limitation can be more easily justified than for any other cultural unit because the Chinese mind never entirely lost the bonds of tradition. It was hardly released from the concentrated exiguity of antique society, when it returned to the symbols of the past, partly to uphold them as ideals, and partly to collect and to copy them as the essence of creative expression.

The bronze vessel was and still is a monument of all-embracing significance. No century passed in China without such objects, produced at first as a sublime art and later copied or coveted as providential keepsakes of unique venerability, enchantment and beauty. The devotion of the Chinese to their past does not imply that they understood every phase and aspect of it at all times. Too many keen observers had unraveled secrets of nature, too many well-meaning reformers had pondered over the texts of antiquity to let a conjuring cult survive and the elaborate magic manifested in its monuments be recognized. The original meaning of a bronze vessel, coming to light after having lain thousands of years buried in the ground, could not have been comprehended by the Chinese of the XIth century A. D., who started interpretations in earnest, and it cannot be comprehended by the Chinese of today. Why not, then, return to the elementary task of consulting the remains themselves, and of collecting what they reveal, until accumulated evidence opens the door to time-blocked meanings.

The bronze that exemplifies the culture of China in this text is a recent find and more than an object of exceptional quality. It also sheds new light on the creative process by its ornamentation. The vessel was conceived as a container for liquid and provided with a cover and a handle, movable in loops (Fig. 1). A hollow foot elevates the base. The cover when removed can be rested on its tubular finial. The type is identified by the name Yu, first given to it by the archaeologists of the xith century (cf. Ch'en Meng-Chia "Style of Chinese Bronzes," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* I, 1945-46, p. 30). Each side is decorated by four horizontal relief-bands, separated by plain bands. There are two on the body, one on the foot, and one on the cover. In addition, the outer convex

surface of the four-sided handle bears ornament. The décor is always set off against an intricate spiral background. A strongly-notched frame projecting in a line with the handle, as well as the décor-belts, emphasizes the frontal character of the broad sides.

The Chinese look first for inscriptions, and the only usable chronology established so far is based on epigraphic evidence (B. Karlgren, "Yin and Chou in Chinese Bronzes," *The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, Bull. n. 8, Stockholm, 1936). The Yu is inscribed identically on the inside bottom of the vessel and in the cover. The inscriptions consist of several characters headed by the ya-hing cartouche (cf. Karlgren, *op. cit.*, p. 21). Ever since Karlgren established this symbol as one of those indicating an origin during the period of Shang, according to the orthodox chronology ending 1122 B. C., scholars have deduced a Shang date from its presence. However, Ch'en Meng-Chia (*op. cit.*, p. 45) and others have pointed out that Shang inscriptions can be repeated at a later time, and since elements of style point towards origin during the following period of Early Western Chou, 1122-circa 950 B. C., the latter date has been chosen for this vessel, without further elaboration of the issue. Silhouettes have also been considered as indicative of the period (cf. L. Bachhofer, "The Evolution of Shang and Early Chou Bronzes," *The Art Bulletin*, v. XXVI, n. 2, 1944 and Ch'en Meng-Chia *op. cit.*). The investigation of this form-element will certainly yield results, although it seems still not sufficiently advanced to require consideration at this point.

The technique of early Chinese bronze production has been frequently discussed (cf. O. Karlbeck, "Anyang Moulds," *The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, Bull. n. 7, Stockholm, 1935). It has been suggested that pottery moulds were used either for the wax-model or for direct casting. The décor of two sides, although basically the same, is rarely identical and slight differences occur even between the symmetrical halves of one side. The Yu confirms this diversity of moulds. On the largest décor-belt of one side (Fig. 1), horizontal bars are attached to the horn-tips, each with a rising spur in the center. Similar formations in the same line are repeated towards the flanges, separate from the horns, but flanking them with vertical strokes, most likely as space-filling devices. On the reverse side of the vessel, and in a more elaborate form, only one of the four bars is repeated; it is the outer one at the right, creating a discrepancy not only between the two sides but also destroying the symmetry of one side. Another instance of variance between sides can be observed on the other band of the body, between the central mask and the projecting loops. The space is filled by

an ornament which on one side (Fig. 1) comes so close to the mask that its flanking vertical hooks can be read as part of either ornament. On the reverse side (Fig. 2), they are separated from the accessory motif by the spiral ground and thus can belong only to the central mask.

Observations of this kind lead to the all-important deciphering of the decoration. The prominence of the largest band is enhanced by being placed between circle-bands. Its main motif can be identified as a water buffalo. The broad horizontal horns with rising, slightly inward curved tips, marked by crossing curved chevrons, the cleft hoofs and the long grooved tails are all true to nature. The animal is further singled out by the concavity of its nostrils which contrasts with the convex ones, commonly given to the pictorizations of the fauna of Chinese antiquity and well represented in the band above. However, the dominating animal is not represented as a naturalistic water buffalo, as are the full-round heads at the bases of the handle (Fig. 2). The flanking body profiles hardly equal the length of the relief head. Each foreleg is bent in two places at a right angle. The head is earless. The mouth is moved to the sides of the nostrils and provided with the quite unbovine feature of sharp teeth along the upper jaw. The lower jaws follow and have the form of outward curved hooks, starting from modelled spirals. With the exception of horns and hoofs, every design element inside of the silhouette is far removed from reality. Bodies and legs are covered with geometric patterns. The bulging eyes, without indication of pupil as always on this vessel, appear within a peculiar frame which is typical for Shang and Early Western Chou. Its frequent descriptions never fail to mention its salient characteristics, namely the straight uninterrupted line of the upper lid and the inner canthus, "hooked like the beaks of birds" (Waterbury, *op. cit.*, p. 36). In addition, the forehead bears a lozenge, topped by a rectangle, a detail, that sometimes accommodates a superimposed descending insect, although in this instance so abbreviated that only tail and wings are drawn. The band of the cover repeats the one just described. It adapts the buffalo to the narrower space and thus shows the eye frame in an even greater elongation. It also widens the gap between the jaws.

The smaller band on the body is dominated also by a frontal animal head without the addition of a body, except for the previously-mentioned hooks. It differs from the one beneath in the rendering of the nostrils already described and in the selection of elements for its head. These are limited to a pair of erect ears, each in the form of a C-shaped double spiral with a sharp point at the upper outside corner. Until recently this type of head



Fig. 1. BRONZE VESSEL, YU TYPE, EARLY WESTERN CHOU PERIOD
Private Collection, New York City



Fig. 2. DETAIL OF BRONZE VESSEL (from reverse side)

Private Collection, New York City

would have been tagged as a "tao-t'ieh," or glutton, following the unfortunate initiative of the first Chinese archaeologists. Florance Waterbury traced its feline features to a tiger (*op. cit.*, p. 2ff.), a designation that should be generally adopted. The tiger-mask is flanked by two identical ornaments (Fig. 2), which deserve close attention. They are flat with the

exception of two bulges in each, which from the experience gained in the observation of other ornaments can easily be identified as eyes. The eye closest to the handle emerges from the same characteristic frame as those of the buffalo and the tiger. From this touchstone can be reconstructed the whole animal. Beneath the eye is the upper lip with serrated teeth and paralleling it, the lower jaw with its outward curve. By regarding the horizontal band, that leads to the handle, as a thigh, its continuation at a right angle as a shin and the three prongs at its end as a claw, a leg is completed. The double band above the eye then becomes a body with forward bent tail. Denominations of this accessory animal-profile varied from the fabulous kuei to the "vertical dragon" (Karlgren, *op. cit.*, p. 94), until Waterbury conveniently suggested "disintegrated tigers" (Waterbury, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 and 81). The identification of this part of the ornament can be corroborated by numerous other bronzes but it leaves the second eye-bulge unaccounted. Above it a small peak rises upward like the crest of a bird, and to the side a projection with a vertical edge, the corners turned backward, meets the tiger's body. The latter form has been recognized as a characteristic beak of Shang and Early Western Chou birds (A. Salmony, "A Problem in the Iconography of Three Early Bird Vessels," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* I, 1945-46, p. 56). If the hooks at the sides of the frontal tiger-mask can be attached to this part of the ornament, they become plumes (Fig. 1). To complete the bird, there is along the upper lip of the descending tiger-profile a band that can form the bird's body. It ends in an inward curved tail and is provided with a small spiral immediately below the eye to indicate a wing in the conventional manner. The deciphering of the ornament reveals a symphysis of tiger and bird profiles, one moved closely into the other, an illustration of the blending process commonly applied to early Chinese images (*cf.* Salmony, *op. cit.*, p. 59).

To complete the description of the décor the base must be mentioned. The sides of its band are occupied by flat animal profiles, which come close to Karlgren's "winged dragons" (Karlgren, *op. cit.*, p. 94). Except for the doubled bars of their bodies, they resemble the vertical tigers of the symphysis and should thus be designated. A shield-like form, reminiscent of the vertical addition above the nose of frontal animal heads, occupies the center. Most likely, it serves as a space-filler without any relation to an animal. Between the shield and the tigers emerges on each side a strange tadpole-like feature, for which the present writer knows no prototype.

The ornamentation of the handle follows a well-known scheme. Three

four-sided pyramidal bosses subdivide the curve into four sections, each one adorned with a descending insect, their heads preceded by long outstretched tentacles, ending in opposing spirals (Fig. 2).

The bronze Yu makes it possible to demonstrate that no mechanical device was employed for the decoration of its two sides, or for the two halves of one side. More important revelations concern the ornament building. All the dominating figures and many accessory ones are inspired by nature and retain enough of their prototype's characteristic features to make its identification possible. Such earmarks become standardized and can be combined to form composite animals, a basically additional procedure which has long been recognized as common practice of early Chinese art. The blending of images follows a similar method by replacing a part of one animal with the whole or a portion of another (*cf.* Salmony, *op. cit.*, p. 59). The feline teeth of the water buffalo serve as an example. The present writer discussed also the trend towards reduction of standardized forms and mentioned several such abbreviations (*loc. cit.*). But so far, they were demonstrated on single animals only. The tiger-profiles of this vessel may well be the result of this tendency. Through the tiger-bird symphysis one has the first glimpse of the merging of two animals. Their imbroglio is the extreme manifestation of a drift towards simplification, although still in accordance with the general character of Shang and Early Western Chou art.

This study closes without reference to the meaning of the symbols described. It was not the purpose of the writer to add new speculations or to endorse previous ones. It has been undertaken with the modest intent to facilitate a correct reading of ornaments, without which the symbolism of Ancient China is bound to remain a sealed book, even though some of the symbols have been used continuously by the traditionally-minded Chinese. It was further undertaken to exemplify by this monumental bronze of Early Western Chou that China never has lost these bonds of tradition. This symbol was a complete expression of its time, the highest manifestation of a ritual art produced by a civilization versed in the use of a symbolic language and favored with superb craftsmanship. In one respect, the bronze vessel, although illustrating the initial stage of Chinese art, assumes general significance. It indicates that a functional object can be used as the vehicle of religious symbolism. Throughout its creative history, China ignores the difference between "fine" and "applied" arts.

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

THE EDITORS AND STAFF OF ART IN AMERICA
JOIN IN EXPRESSING DEEP REGRET AT THE
SUDDEN DEATH ON SEPTEMBER 9, 1947 OF
DR. ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY. HIS ARTICLE
IN THIS ISSUE, COMPLETED A SHORT WHILE
BEFORE HIS DEATH, IS THE LAST EXAMPLE OF
HIS CREATIVE ART RESEARCH AND CRITICISM
TO WHICH HE HAD DEVOTED A LIFETIME.

AN INDIAN TEMPLE: THE KANDARYA MAHADEO

By THE LATE ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

THE nature of the present symposium suggests the use of a single illustration, but the reader is asked to understand that my subject in the present short article is really that of the Hindu temple, irrespective of period and relative complexity or simplicity. The choice of this subject is one that is made especially appropriate by the recent publication of Dr. Stella Kramrisch's magnificent work, *The Hindu Temple* (Calcutta, 1946).

It may be remarked, in the first place, that the most essential part of the concept of a temple is that of an altar on which, or hearth in which, offerings can be made to an invisible presence that may or may not be represented iconographically. The types of the oldest shrines are those of the "stone-tables"¹ of megalithic cults and those of the stone altars of tree or pillar cults²; or the shrine may be a hearth, the burnt offering being conveyed to the Gods with the smoke of the fire, Agni thus functioning as missal priest. In all these cases the shrine, even when the shrine is walled or fenced about, remains hypaethral, open to the sky.³ On the other hand the oldest Indian type of sacred architecture both enclosed and roofed is that of the Sadas ("seat," the sacrificial operation being itself a *sattra*, "session") of the Vedic sacrifice or Mass; made only for temporary use, this enclosure is a place "apart" (*tiras*, *antarhita*) to which the Gods resort and in which the sacrificer, having put on "the garment of initiation and ardor," sleeps, becoming "as it were one of themselves" for the time being; he becomes, indeed, an embryo, and is reborn from the sacred enclosure as from a womb.⁴ This "hut or hall is a microcosm," of which the corners, for example, are called "the four quarters."⁵ At the same time it must be recognized that no fundamental distinction can be made between the God-house as such and the dwellings of men, whether huts or palaces, as is evident in the case of those cultures, notably the Indian, in which the Paterfamilias himself officiates as household priest, daily performing the Agni-hotra in the domestic circle.

¹Cf. J. Layard, *Stone Men of Malekula*, 1942, pp. 625, 701, on dolmens as altars, used also as seats.

²Cf. my *Yaksas*, I, Washington 1928, p. 17.

³Cf. my "Early Indian Architecture, II Bodhigharas," in *Eastern Art* II, 1930. The Greek word (as applied to Cynics and Indian Gymnosophists) = *abbhokāsika* (as applied to Buddhist monks), cf. *vivatta-chado* ("whose roof has been opened up," said of a Buddha).

⁴SB 3.1.1.8, 3.1.3.28, TS 6.1.1.1, 6.2.5.5 etc.

⁵TS 6.1.1.1 with Keith's comment in *HOS* 19.483, note 4.

In addition to this it must be realized that in India, as elsewhere, not only are temples made with hands, the universe in a likeness, but man himself is likewise a microcosm and a "holy temple"⁶ or "City of God" (*brahmapura*).⁷ The body, the temple, and the universe being thus analogous, it follows that whatever worship is outwardly and visibly performed can also be celebrated inwardly and invisibly, the "gross" ritual being, in fact, no more than a tool or support of contemplation; the external means having, just as had been the case in Greece, for its "end and aim the knowledge of Him who is the First, the Lord, and the Intelligible,"^{7a} — as distinguished from the visible. It is recognized also, of course, that "the whole earth is divine," i. e. potentially an altar, but that a place is necessarily selected and prepared for an actual sacrifice, the validity of such a site depending not upon the site itself but on that of the sacerdotal art; and such a site is always theoretically both on a high place and at the centre, or "navel" of the earth, with an eastward orientation, since it is "from the east westwards that the Gods come unto men."⁸

It is constantly emphasized, accordingly, that the sacrifice is essentially a mental operation, to be performed both outwardly and inwardly, or in any case inwardly. It is prepared by the sacrificer's "whole mind and whole self." The sacrificer is as it were emptied out of himself, and is himself the real victim.⁹ The true end of the cult is one of reintegration and resurrection, attainable not by a merely mechanical performance of the service, but by a full realization of its significance, or even by this comprehension alone.¹⁰ The Agnihotra, or Burnt-Offering, for example, may be, and is for the comprehensor, an interior self-sacrifice, in which the heart is the altar, the outer man the offering, and the flame the dompted self.¹¹

The human frame, the constructed temple, and the universe being analogical equivalents, the parts of the temple correspond to those of the human body no less than to those of the universe itself.¹² All these dimensioned (*nirmita*, *vimita*) forms are explicitly "houses," indwelt and filled by an invisible Presence and representing its possibilities of manifestation in time and space; their *raison d'être* is that it may be known. For this unifying and constructive Principle, the Spirit or Self of all beings, is only

⁶I Cor. 3.16, 17.

⁷AV 10.2.30, CU 8.1.1-5.

^{7a}Plutarch, *Mor.* 352 A

⁸SB 1.1.2.23, 3.1.1.1, 4.

⁹SB 2.4.1.11, 3.3.4.21, 3.8.1.2, 9.5.1.53

¹⁰SB 10.4.2.31, 10.4.3.24.

¹¹SA 10; SB 10.5.3.12; *Samyutta Nikāya* 1.169.

¹²Cf. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 1946: pp. 357-361 "The Temple as Purusa."



THE KANDARYA MAHADEO
Khajuraho, India

apparently confined by its habitations which, like other images, serve as supports of contemplation, none being ends in themselves but more or less indispensable means to liberation from every sort of enclosure. The position, in other words, is primarily iconolatrous, but teleologically iconoclastic.

Each of the "houses" we are considering is dimensioned and limited in six directions — nadir, quarters, and zenith; the feet, floor, or earth — bulk, interior space, or atmospheric space; and cranium, roof, or sky defining the extent of this man, this church, and this world respectively. Here we can consider only one or two particular aspects of these and other analogies. The temple has, for example, windows and doors from which the indweller can look out and go forth, or conversely return to himself; and these correspond in the body to the "doors of the senses" through which one can either look out in times of activity, or from which one can return to the "heart" of one's being when the senses are withdrawn from their objects in concentration. There is, however, in theory, another door or window, accessible only by a "ladder" or the "rope" by which our being is suspended from above, and through which one can emerge from the dimensioned structure so as to be no longer on a level with its ground, or within it, but altogether above it. In man, this exit is represented by the cranial foramen, which is still unclosed at birth, and that is opened up again at death when the skull is ritually broken, though as regards its significance it may be kept open throughout one's life by appropriate spiritual exercises, for this God-aperture (*brahma-randhra*) corresponds to the "eye" or "point" of the heart, the microcosmic City of God (*brahmapura*) within you, from which the Spirit departs at death.¹³ Architecturally, the *brahma-randhra* or foramen of the human cranium or man-made temple corresponds to the luffer, smoke-hole, or skylight (*Lichtloch*) of the traditional house; and in some ancient and relatively modern Western temples this "oculus" of the dome still remains an open circular window, and the structure therefore "hypoethral."¹⁴ In the early Indian timbered domes

¹³BU 4.4.2; CU 8.1.1-4; *Hamsa Up.* 1.3. For the breaking of the skull *Garuda Purāna* 10.56-59 (*bhītvā brahmarandhrakam*) corresponding to *bhītvā kannika-mandalam* architecturally, DhA 3.66, and to *bhītvā sūryamandalam* ("breaking through the solar disk") microcosmically, MU 6.30. In the *Purāna* this "breaking through" represents explicitly the rebirth of the deceased from the sacrificial fire in which the body is burnt; cf. JUB 3.11.7.

For the "eye of the heart" cf. Comenius, *The Labyrinth of the World* (1631, based on J. V. Andreae, *Civis Christianus*), tr. by Spinka, Chicago 1942, chs. 37, 38, 40 ("in the vault of this my chamber, a large round window above," approachable only by ladders, and through which on the one hand Christ looks down from above and on the other "one could peer out into the beyond").

¹⁴For instance, the Roman Pantheon; cf. Piranesi's engraving of the Tempio della Tossa. "Even today lest he [Terminus] see aught above him but the stars, have temple roofs their tiny aperture" (*exiguum . . . foramen*, Ovid, *Fast.* 2.667). For Islamic architecture, cf. E. Diez in *Ars*

the opening above is apparently closed by the circular roof-plate (*kannikā*) on which the rafters rest like the spokes of a wheel or ribs of an umbrella, but this plate is perforated, and in any case functions as a doorway or place of exit through which the Perfected (Arahants) movers-at-will and "sky-farers" are repeatedly described as making their departure; it is an "upper-door" (*agga-dvāra*).¹⁵ In later Indian lithic structures in the same way the summit of the spire is apparently closed by a circular stone slab (*āmalakā*), but this, too, is perforated for the reception of the tenon of the finial which prolongs the central axis of the whole structure; and the term *brahma-randhra* remains in use. Finally, in the world of which the sky is the roof, the Sun himself is the Janua Coeli, the "gateway of liberation" (*mokṣa-dvāra*), the only way by which to break out of the dimensioned universe, and so "escape altogether."¹⁶

We have considered so far the altar (always in some sense a sacrificial hearth, analogous to the "heart") and the oculus of the dome (always in some sense a symbol of the Sun) as the proximate and ultimate goals of the worshipper who comes to visit the deity, whose man-made "house" the temple is there to devote himself. The altar, like the sacred hearth, is always theoretically at the centre or "navel" of the earth, and the solar eye of the dome always in the centre of the ceiling or *coelum* immediately above it; and these two are connected in principle, as in some early struc-

Islamica 5, pp. 39, 45, "space was the primary problem and was placed in relation to, and dependence on, infinite space by means of the widely open *opaion* in the zenith of the cupola. This relation to open space was always emphasized by the skylight lantern in Western architecture . . . Islamic art appears as the individuation of its metaphysical basis (unendliche Grund)."

¹⁵See my "Pali Kannikā: Circular Roof-Plate," *JAOS* 50, 1930; "The Symbolism of the Dome," *IHQ* 14, 1938 (pt. 3) "Svayamātrnnā; Janua Coeli," *Zalmoxis* 2, 1939; and for the *agga-dvāra*, "Some Sources of Buddhist Iconography," *B. C. Law Volume*, I, 1945, p. 473, note 12. For exit *via* the roof cf. *Odyssey* 1.320 where Athene, leaving Odysseus' house, "flew like a bird through the oculus"; Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 1936, p. 92 ("And he [the god Midir] carried her [Etain] off through the smokehole of the house . . . and they saw two swans circling"); and H. Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimos*, 1875, pp. 60, 61, (when "the *angakok* [shaman] had to make a flight, he started through an opening which appeared of itself in the roof").

It is through the cosmic that the Man, the Son of God, looks down, and descends (Hermes Trismegistos, *Lib.* 1.14). And just as the *kannikā* is a symbol of *samādhi*, "synthesis," so is this Greek capstone a "harmony," as Pausanias says, "of the whole edifice." (Pausanias, 8.8.9 and 9.38.7)

In connection with the term *agga-dvāra* it may be observed that *agga* (= *agra*, cf. *Phaedrus* 247 B and Philo, *Opif.* 71), "summit," is predicated of the Buddha (*A* 2.17, *D* 3.147), who "opens the doors of immortality" (*Vin.* 1.7, *D* 2.33, *M* 1.167) and is in this sense a "Door-God," like Agni (*AB* 3.42) and like Christ (John 10.9, St. Th. Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* III. 49.5); this Janua Coeli being the door at which the Buddhas are said to stand and knock (*S* 2.58.)

Further pertinent material will be found in P. Sartori, "Das Dach im Volksglauben," *Zeit. des Vereins f. Volkskunde*, 25, 1915, pp. 228-241; K. Rhamm as reviewed by V. Ritter v. Geramb, *ib.* 26, 1916; R. Guénon, "Le symbolisme du dome," *Études Traditionnelles* 43, 1938; F. J. Tirtsch, "False Doors in Tombs," *JHS* LXIII, 1943, pp. 113-115; and more generally in W. R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism, and Myth*, 1892.

¹⁶JUB 1.3.5, i.e. "through the midst of the Sun," *ib.* 1.6.1, the Janua Coeli, *ib.* 4.14.5, 4.15.4.5, or "Sundoor" of MU 6.30 and Mund. Up. 1.2.11.

tures they were in fact, by an axial pillar at once uniting and separating floor and roof, and supporting the latter; as it was in the beginning, when heaven and earth, that had been one, were "pillared apart" by the Creator.¹⁷ It is by this pillar, regarded as a bridge¹⁸ or ladder, or because of its immateriality, like a bird on wings,¹⁹ and in any case from its base — for "there is no side path here in the world"²⁰ — that the "hard ascent after Agni" (*dūrohaṇa*, *agner anvārohaḥ*)²¹ must be made from below to the Sundoor above; an ascent that is also imitated in countless climbing rites, and notably in that of the ascent of the sacrificial post (*yūpa*) by the sacrificer who, when he reaches its summit and raises his head above its capital, says, on behalf of himself and his wife: "We have reached the Heaven, reached the Gods; we have become immortals, become the children of Prajāpati."²² For them the distance that separates heaven from earth is temporarily annihilated; the bridge lies behind them.

The nature and full significance of the cosmic pillar (*skambha*), the Axis Mundi referred to above, can best be grasped from its description in *Atharva Veda* 10.7 and 8,²³ or understood in terms of the Islamic doctrine of the Qutb, with which the Perfect Man is identified, and on which all things turn. In the Vedic Sadas it is represented by the King-post (*sthūṇa-rāja*, or *sāla-vamsa*) which the sacrificer himself erects, and that stands for the Median Breath,²⁴ and in the same way within you, as the axial principle of one's own life and being.²⁵ In the Vedic (Fire-) altar, a constructed image of the universe, this is also the axial principle that passes through the three "self-perforated bricks" (*svayamātrnnā*), of which the uppermost corresponds to the Sundoor of the later texts; an axis that — like Jacob's ladder — is "the way up and down these worlds." In visiting the deity whose image or symbol has been set up in the womb of the temple the worshipper is returning to the heart and centre of his own being to

¹⁷Rv passim. In general, the axial column of the universe is a pillar (*mita*, *sthūnā*, *vamsa*, *skambha*, etc.) of Fire (RV 1.59.1, 4.5.1, 10.5.6) or Life (RV 10.5.6) or solar Light (JUB 1.10.10), Breath or Spirit (*rānah*, passim), i.e. the Selt (*ātman*, BU 4.4.22). The primordial separation of Heaven and Earth is common to the creation myths of the whole world.

¹⁸D. L. Coomaraswamy, "The Perilous Bridge of Welfare," *HJAS* 8, 1944.

¹⁹PB 5.3.5

²⁰MU 6.30.

²¹TS 5.6.8, AB 4.20-22.

²²TS 1.7.9, 5.6.8, 6.6.4.2; SB 5.2.1.5. Cf. in my "Svayamātrnnā; Janua Coeli," *loc. cit.* pp. 13, 14.

²³AV 10.7.35 and 8.2, "The Skambha sustains both heaven and earth . . . and hath inhabited all existences . . . Whereby these twain are pillared apart, therein is all this that is enspirited (*ātmanvat*), all that breathes and blinks."

²⁴AA 3.1.4, 3.2.1; SA 8; cf. in my "Sunkiss," *JAOS* 60, 1940, p. 58 with note 30.

²⁵BU 2.2.1 where in the subtle and gross bodies of individuals, "the median Breath is the pillar" (*madhyamah prānah* . . . *sthūnā*).

perform a devotion that prefigures his ultimate resurrection and regeneration from the funeral pyre in which the last sacrifice is made.

We are thus brought back again to the concept of the three analogous — bodily, architectural, and cosmic — “houses” that the Spirit of Life inhabits and fills; and recognize at the same time that the values of the oldest architectural symbolism are preserved in the latest buildings and serve to explain their use.²⁶ I shall only emphasize, in conclusion, what has already been implied, that the Indian architectural symbolism shortly outlined above, is by no means peculiarly or exclusively Indian, but rather world-wide. For example, that the sacred structure is a microcosm, the world in a likeness, is explicit amongst the American Indians: as remarked by Sartori, “Bei den Huichol-Indianern . . . der Tempel gilt als Abbild der Welt, das Dach als Himmel, und die Zeremonien, die beim Bau vollzogen werden, beziehen sich fast alle auf diese Bedeutung,”²⁷ and as related by Speck in his description of the Delaware “Big-House,” “the Big-House stands for the universe; its floor, the earth; its four walls, the four quarters; its vault, the sky-dome atop, where resides the Creator in his indefinable supremacy . . . the centre-post is the staff of the Great Spirit with its foot upon the earth, with its pinnacle reaching to the hand of the Supreme Being sitting on his throne.”²⁸ In the same way, from the Indian point of view, with respect to the way up and down: “Within these two movements the Hindu temple has its being; its central pillar is erected from the heart of the Vāstupuruṣa in the Brahmassthāna, from the centre and heart of existence on earth, and supports the Prasāda Puruṣa in the Golden Jar in the splendour of the Empyrean.”²⁹

²⁶“En effet, il est bien connu que la construction de l'autel du feu est un sacrifice personnel déguisé en activité artistique de l'Inde s'est toujours senti, nous l'avons reconnu, de ce que la première oeuvre d'art brahmanique ait été un autel ou le donataire, autrement dit le sacrificant, s'unissait à son dieu,” P. Mus, *Barabudur*, 1, 1935, pp. *92, *94.

²⁷P. Sartori, *loc. cit.* p. 233.

²⁸F. G. Speck, on the Delaware Big-House, cited from *Publications of Pennsylvania Historical Commission*, vol. 2, 1931, by Father W. Schmidt, *High Gods of North America*, 1933, p. 75. Father Schmidt remarks, p. 78, “The Delawares are perfectly right in affirming this, the fundamental importance of the centre-post,” points out that the same holds good for many other Indian tribes, amongst whom “the centre-post of the ceremonial hut has a quite similar symbolical function and thus belongs to the oldest religious elements of North America.”

On the importance of the centre-post cf. also Strzygowski, *Early Church Art in Northern Europe*, 1928, p. 141, in connection with “the Mast-Churches of Noreay”: “The steeple marking the apex of the perpendicular axis appears to be a relic of the time when the only type was the one-mast church.” For China, cf. G. Ecke, “Once More Shen-T'ung Ssu and Ling-Yen Ssu,” *Monumenta Serica* 7, 1942, 295ff. Cf. the invocatory verse of the *Dasakumāracarita*: “May the staff of His foot, the Three-strider's (Vishnu), bear thee across — viz., the staff of the umbrella of the Brahmadā, the stalk of the Hundred-Sacrificer's (Brahmā's) cosmic lotus, the mast of the ship of the earth, the flag-pole of the banner of the nectar-shedding river, the pole of the axis of the planetary sphere, the pillar of victory over the three worlds, and death-dealing club of the foes of the Gods — may this be thy means of crossing over.”

²⁹Stella Kramrisch, *loc. cit.* p. 360.

Finally, inasmuch as the temple is the universe in a likeness, its dark interior is occupied only by a single image or symbol of the informing Spirit, while externally, its walls are covered with representations of the divine powers in all their manifested multiplicity. In visiting the shrine, one proceeds inwards from multiplicity to unity, just as in contemplation; and on returning again to the outer world, sees that one has been surrounded by all the innumerable forms that the Sole Seer and Agent within assumes in his playful activity. And this distinction between the outer world and the inner shrine of an Indian temple, into which one enters "so as to be born again from its dark womb"³⁰ is the same that Plotinus makes, when he observes that the seer of the Supreme, being one with his vision, "is like one who, having penetrated to the inner sanctuary, leaves the temple images behind him — though these become once more the object of his first regard when he leaves the holies; for there his converse was not with image, not with trace, but with the very Truth."³¹

The deity who assumes innumerable forms, and has no form, is one and the same Puruṣa, and to worship in either way leads to the same liberation: "however men approach Me, even so do I welcome them."³² In the last analysis, the ritual, like that of the old Vedic sacrifice, is an interior procedure, of which the outward forms are only a support, indispensable for those who being still on their way have not yet reached its end, but that can be dispensed with by those who have already found it and though they may be still in the world are not of it. In the meantime, there can be no greater danger or hindrance than that of the premature iconoclasm of those who still confuse their own existence with their own being, and have not yet "known The Self"; these are the vast majority, and for them the temple and all its figurations are sign-posts on their Way.

³⁰Stella Kramrisch, *loc. cit.* p. 368.

³¹Plotinus, *Enneads*

³²*Bhagavad Gītā* 4.11.



AMIENS CATHEDRAL, NAVE LOOKING TOWARD ALTAR

A FRENCH GOTHIC CATHEDRAL: AMIENS

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THE big central entrance of the west façade of Amiens Cathedral is divided by a pillar into two doors. In front of this pillar the statue of Christ is standing, the famous *beau dieu*. He blesses those who enter. His attitude is solemn and aristocratic. The clergymen and monks of those days of the third decade of the 13th century, all educated knights and ladies, all scholars, and most of the simple people who heard the sermons every Sunday knew not only that Christ is the host who welcomes His pious guests in His home, but that there exists a sentence in the Bible that Christ said: "I am the door. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will pass in and out and find pasture."

These words are meant as a simile. Christ is the way to the Father. The statue of Christ in Amiens is standing upon the lion and the dragon. The lion means the Antichrist, the dragon means the devil; Christ is vanquishing both. Whoever understood those literary symbols knew why the statue of Christ was put into the center of the entrance to the home of God.

There are innumerable literary symbols of this kind. One has to learn them, as they are partly conventional, as when the statues of the Apostles have the signs of their martyrdom as attributes. The whole cathedral is adorned with figures carved in stone and figures and stories painted on the stained glass of the windows. He who understands the iconography of mediaeval times has the key with which to understand its symbolic meaning. If one takes all the topics together — the ancestors of Christ, the stories of the Virgin and of Christ himself, the legends of the Saints, the representations of the virtues and vices, of the flowers and animals, of the zodiac, of the Last Judgment with Paradise and Hell — it is the universe which is shown to the people and everyone has to understand that this means: the universe is the symbol of God, all transitory things are symbols of eternity; the whole house of God, the whole cathedral, although a piece of this world, means the other world to which the Christian believer has to raise his heart.

About these literary symbols exists a great literature. We have to differentiate between pure conventional signs and literary symbols. The mathematicians call their signs symbols, but here in art history the word is meant in its specific sense: a symbol has a meaning and this

meaning has a higher meaning. There are always two levels in a symbol, the directly given sense and an additional one which has to be grasped by imagination. The symbol stands for the symbolized idea and many people make the mistake of taking the symbolizing for the symbolized. Although most literary symbols are more or less conventional, the men who introduced them made their choice not totally arbitrarily. These symbols are understandable for those who have a sense of poetry.

Yet if we talk about art, namely about architecture, sculpture and painting, the word "symbol" means something different; it is the form which becomes the symbol of that which the form means. The structure of a cathedral has its well-known purpose, its practical meaning, but the Romanesque forms give a different spiritual expression to this religious purpose than do Gothic forms. Here we are at the core of art. Words speak to those who have learned the special language, but forms speak too. They are understandable by the way of esthetic approach to those who by nature or by education have the ability to transpose them into an adequate feeling. The most obvious side of this phenomenon is, in the Cathedral of Amiens, the verticalism. It is so strong that everybody seems raised up in the direction of Heaven where, again in symbolic reasoning, God is thought to reside. The verticalism leads to this feeling of being lifted up and the feeling leads to an idea, yet verticalism as such is a simple direction of space and any such direction can get its symbolic meaning when the architect knows how to emphasize it and to use it as a factor in a whole system which he develops as a unit.

In the case of Amiens, Gothic is based on the expression of the *sursum corda* of the Catholic Mass; though it is not always based on this factor. We know periods and provinces of Gothic which returned to horizontalism and remained Gothic nevertheless. Scholars have given thought to the question of what forms are essential for this style. They have discussed the pointed arch; they have spoken about the picturesque, the functional, the systematic order of the architectural members, of the importance of the ribs, the buttresses and flying buttresses, the plasticity of the details, the dissolution of the wall into a skeleton in the 19th century. Most of these characteristics are found in certain periods of Gothic or certain schools, but which of these are indispensable? We have to answer: it is the tendency to create a continuous movement from one compartment to the other, from one body to the other. The first ribs introduced into the cross vaults in Normandy toward the end of the 12th century brought the subdivision of the space in a diagonal direction; this system was for the

first time brought to a certain degree of completion in Saint-Denis, when in 1140 the choir was begun. The embryonic stage was past, Gothic was born. In Amiens in 1220 the system had reached such a degree of unification and clarity that people believed the classic height of the style to be accomplished. Many scholars still stick to this doctrine; for them the following centuries are therefore nothing but a long and sad decline and decay. This is a mistake. Gothic went on to become more and more consistent in the enhancement of its basic character, to dispose more and more of the Romanesque tradition and to bring out in full and even in exaggerated degree that form which is the symbol of Christian belief of mediaeval times. This belief changed through the discussions of scholars, the so-called scholastics. The changes in the forms of Gothic architecture and the changes in the ideas expressed in philosophy had a fundamentally synchronized development. That in general the different fields of human activity, as, e. g., philosophy and architecture, were interrelated, is obvious. The explanation of this fact lies in their dependence upon the same society, the same individuals who seek harmony in their own hearts. When the Cathedral of Amiens was built — its main part from 1200 to 1288 — this harmony was reached in the interpretation of Christianity through the great philosophers in their systems; through the royal politic, unifying France; the idealism of the knights and the masses, realized in the crusades; the preponderance of the church in the daily life, the subordination of the individual under the unity of church and state. The individual could be extremely individualistic but it remained always a fragment of the whole society.

Exactly this is expressed in Gothic architecture. All parts of the building are fragments of the whole. We can of course differentiate the parts and can talk separately about the arcades, the triforium, the clerestory of Amiens Cathedral, but they are interconnected by a stream of forces; we can talk of the single windows, but they form a continuous horizontal stripe and each window is in itself a whole, divided through the tracery so that each part is a fragment of the whole window. We can talk of the single bays, we can unmistakably count them, but one bay fluctuates into the next one and the nave seems the primary whole inside of which the parts, namely the bays, are formed. Each compartment of each nave is covered with its own rib vault, and each has its clear center in the keystone of the vault, but the diagonal of the ribs leads the eyes from one side to the other and back through the next compartment, so that the nave becomes the primary unit and the bays seem the result of a logical subdivision.

One can prove this principle of subdivision everywhere in Amiens. It is the opposite of the principle of addition governing Romanesque style. A single detail may illustrate this convincingly: the development of the capital. In Romanesque style the cushion capital is a separate unit, stopping the stream of force seemingly moving up in the pillar or the colonnette; it protrudes at an angle of much less than 180 degrees, creating a visible separation. In Gothic style the chalice capital receives the stream coming up and continues the vertical movement, simply because the angle is here about 180 degrees.

We are able to make many special differentiations in the history of the capital from the Romanesque to the Gothic. We realize that when the Gothic style had reached the best solution of the capitals — to make the flow of movement upward as smooth as possible — the consistent evolution was for the architects to throw the capitals overboard and create those shafts which begin at the bottom and mount without interruption to the rib vaults.

This observation about the trend of development after the 1220 design of the Cathedral of Amiens, leads us back to the controversial problem of what it means to call Amiens classic. This word has at least two meanings: First, that the solution, offered in this cathedral, is in itself of perfect harmony; second, that it is the climax of development of the style itself. The first case cannot be questioned. The design of each detail and the execution are in all parts of an utmost maturity; it is a masterwork in each centimeter, and represents the highest level of genius which is attainable in this direction. Yet the second meaning of classic is less simple and less clear. The style itself was not finished. The following generation, that of Pierre de Montereau who began in 1231 the rebuilding of the nave in Saint-Denis, introduced the uninterrupted shafts; and the next generations made those other corrections — yes, corrections — which finally led to works like the façade of S. Maclou in Rouen, the interior of the Henry VII Chapel in London, or Our Lady's Church in Munich. These were works of different character but of the same approach to the main problem of Gothic style. The comparison of Amiens both with Romanesque and Late Gothic makes it clear that this cathedral still contains many remnants of Romanesque style: the crossing and the transept, the form of the basilica that means that the side aisles are still separate units. The organism as a whole is still the same as in the big Romanesque churches. Finally, the plasticity of all forms, the result of the profiles, is still Romanesque in its tendency; the pillars of Amiens and the shafts are formed in such a way

that they push back the space while in Late Gothic the space penetrates into the concavities of the pillars and into all profiles of the mouldings. The bodies seem to suck in the space. Amiens is, seen from this point of view, the representative of the harmony between Romanesque and Gothic, while Late Gothic works, especially in England and Germany, are pure Gothic with complete elimination of all Romanesque tendencies. Shall we call Amiens classic from the second point of view? We may, only if we do not forget that it means the balance between Romanesque and Gothic.

If this is accepted we can return to the main question put to the writers of this series of articles. Amiens is a symbol of its time, expressed through its basic form. We have to feel the verticalism, the dissolution of the walls, the clarity of the structure, and have to take these esthetic feelings as symbols of the purpose of the building. The Catholic Mass, the sacraments and the sermons experienced in this cathedral are interpreted in those forms, making men feel their fragmentary value in the immense space and time of reality. We must feel the quality of the design and the execution as a symbol, seeing the cathedral as equivalent to the perfection of the Christian religion of this time. We have to feel the grandeur of the House of God, its richness and specific Gothic beauty, to penetrate to the core of the work: to the greatness and richness of the Creator. Such a work makes us forget daily worries; it leads to higher contemplation and creates the atmosphere of purity in our hearts.

Amiens is a symbol of the genius of its architect, Robert de Luzarch, but even more it is a symbol of Christian belief. It is also a symbol of the spirit of France in 1220, a monument of a generation, dead for centuries and still living in this amazing cathedral, close to the heart of everyone who has the gift to read the language of form. It represents a generation of greatness, and at the same time of humble acknowledgment that the individual is a lone fragment with the life task to find his completion in a whole which he, with his small strength, helps to create.



Fig. 1. TOMB OF ROBERTO MALATESTA, ROMAN SCHOOL OF 1483
Louvre, Paris

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE: THE TOMB OF ROBERTO MALATESTA

By W. R. VALENTINER

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AS AN example of Renaissance sculpture in the discussion of "art as symbol," I have selected the equestrian figure of Roberto Malatesta (d. 1482), in the Louvre (Fig. 1). This impressive marble relief, whose creator cannot be easily determined, is little known and has never been published as far as I know (in A. Venturi's volume on Quattrocento sculpture it is not even mentioned), yet it is highly significant as an expression of the spirit of the period.

In the Louvre catalogue¹ the relief is described as "Anonymous Italian, fifteenth century (Genoese or Carrara school)." The relief is mentioned by Vasari, who speaks of an equestrian statue by Paolo Romano in S. Peter "standing near the floor in the neighborhood of S. Andrea's chapel." The attribution is not correct, as Paolo Romano died between 1470-73 but the monument was erected in honor of Roberto Malatesta, the victor of the battle of Campo Morto, soon after his death on September 10, 1482; however, a first impression of the work might well suggest its being from the hand of Paolo Romano or his immediate follower Paolo Antonisio, who were foremost among the Roman sculptors of classical tendency.

The identity of the Louvre relief with the one described by Vasari has been recognized by only one of Vasari's commentators, A. Gottschewski;² all the others claim that the work is lost. Gerald Davies, in his book on Renaissance tombs in Rome (1910), tentatively identified the tomb cited by Vasari with the only other Roman tomb of the Renaissance containing an equestrian statue, that of Antonio Rido in S. Francesca Romana (Fig. 2), which, however, was never moved from the church and could hardly be mistaken for a work by Paolo Romano. Inasmuch as we do not know of another relief with this subject, and inasmuch as Roberto Malatesta is the only condottiere whose tomb we might expect in St. Peter's, since he is supposed to have liberated the church from his adversaries, we are justified in believing that the Louvre relief is the one mentioned by Vasari. In 1607 when the last parts of old St. Peter's were destroyed, the tomb was removed to the Grotte of the Vatican; hardly ten years later (1616)

¹Cat. 1922: "Fragment du tombeau érigé à Saint-Pierre de Rome en 1484 . . . École génoise ou carraraise — Collection Borghèse — acquis en 1808."

²Vasari, ed. by A. Gottschewski, III, p. 254, 1906.

the Pope presented it to Cardinal Scipio Borghese who had it built into the façade of his Casino near the Villa Borghese. It remained there until 1808, when it was removed by the French government under Napoleon.

The relief bears in the upper left corner the words: *Robertus Malatesta Riminensis*. This inscription was possibly added at the time the tomb was dismantled. The original inscription, probably on a tablet below the relief, read, as we learn from other sources, as follows:

Virtus socia vitae fuit
Gloria mortis comes
Roberto Malatesta Sigismundi filius Ariminensis.
Principi summis omnium aetatum
Ducibus qualitet belli laude æquando
Ob Roman obsidione liberatam
Sixtus quartus pontifex maximus
Virtutis et officii memor
Pientissime posuit
Vixit annis XL mensibus VII diebus X.³

As Sixtus died August 12, 1484, the monument must have been erected between September 10, 1482, and this date.⁴ Who could have been the artist?

I

It is well known that one of the characteristics of Renaissance artists, though not an essential one, was their enthusiasm for classical art and literature. We notice this trend at once in the conception and the inscriptions of our relief. The Latin inscription is written in imitation of those on Roman tombs; but in addition to this inscription there existed on the tomb, according to another source,⁵ an Italian poem which still more obviously referred to the Roman past by quoting the famous statement of Julius Caesar: *Veni, vidi, vici*. It is probable that the poem was not directly attached to the monument as Italian inscriptions were not commonly found on tombs in Rome at this time, but it is obviously a contemporary effusion. It reads:

Roberto son, che venni, vidi e vinsi
L'inclito duca, e Roma liberai,
E lui d'honore, e me di vita estinsi.

³Sigismondi dei Conti, *Libri historiarum sui temporis*. Florence, 1883.

⁴Obviously it was executed in a hurry as some parts—such as the head of the soldier to the right, the section below the horse's neck, the bridle, and the hands of Roberto and the standard bearer—seem unfinished, while other parts, even the ornamentation, are most carefully worked out.

⁵W. Floerke, *Repräsentanten der Renaissance*, p. 45. Munich, 1924.

As the poetry, so the art of the Renaissance was permeated with motifs taken from classical monuments. The composition of our relief is in imitation of the triumphal procession of a Roman consul, accompanied by soldiers and standard bearers. The movement of the horse is very similar to the positions of those horses which draw the carriage of the enthroned Alfonso I, king of Naples, in his triumphal arch on the Castello Nuovo.⁶ These latter animals, which are from the workshop of Paolo Romano (executed about 1455), are more or less direct copies from classical reliefs. We are reminded even more of Roman riders on the reliefs from the ciborium of Sixtus IV in the Grotte Vaticane, which were executed by followers of Paolo Romano, especially in the workshop of Antonisio, about 1477.⁷ If our relief were not considerably better in quality, we would be inclined to give it to this workshop which was obviously the favorite with Sixtus IV of all the sculpture shops in Rome. In any case, since such reminiscences of the antique were more pronounced in Roman Renaissance tombs than elsewhere in Italy, we can hardly be mistaken if we attribute our relief to a Roman workshop. The fact that the marble is from Carrara does not militate against this supposition as we know from many sources, particularly in connection with Michelangelo's work, that Carrara marble was frequently used by sculptors in Rome.⁸ The representation of the deceased in full armor on horseback is an unusual feature, but characteristic of the efforts of Italian sculptors in this period to emulate the early Romans in this most difficult problem of the equestrian portrait. After the completion of the Gattamelata we hear of several attempts at the different courts to immortalize rulers and condottieri in this manner by imitating classical works, one example of which, the Marcus Aurelius (and another, less important one, the Regisole in Padua) was still before everyone's eyes. Around 1480 Antonio Pollaiuolo competed for the execution of a bronze equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, which commission was soon after awarded to Leonardo. Competing with Verrocchio for the Colleoni at about the same time were Bellano and Leopardi. Pollaiuolo could never forget that he had once lost a chance to create an equestrian statue, and in 1494 we find him informing the condottiere Virginio Orsini, who commissioned him for a portrait bust, that he would prefer the commission for an equestrian statue.

⁶Reproduced in my article in the *Art Bulletin*, 1937.

⁷See A. Venturi, *Storia*, IV, p. 1120-1128; and F. Burger, *Jahrbuch der preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, 1906.

⁸A Carrara school, of which the Louvre catalogue speaks, did not exist; and a connection with the school of Genoa is difficult to discover.

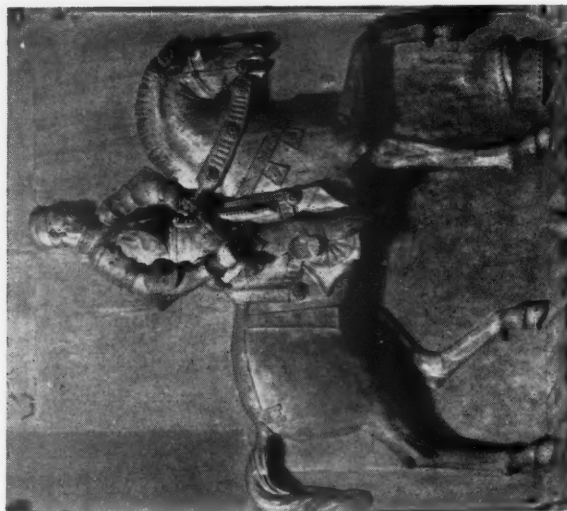


Fig. 2
TOMB OF ANTONIO RIDO BY DALMATA
Church of S. Francesca Romana, Rome



Fig. 3
PORTRAIT OF FRANCESCA CYNTHIO BY DALMATA
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Fig. 4. PORTRAIT OF
MATHIAS CORVINUS BY DALMATA
Archeological Museum, Milan

There is something in the Malatesta relief which reminds us of Antonio Pollaiuolo: the concentrated energy in horse and rider; the marvellous intensity in the forward movement of the whole group, which is brought about by a combination of curves in the horse's body in a horizontal direction and by the straight, slightly inclined lines of the poles held by the soldiers and of the diagonal of the rider's baton; and, finally, a clear dividing of planes towards the depth — the rider is on a first, the soldiers on a second plane — which helps to avoid any dangerous confusion of the legs of the animal and of the men. All of this seems to have been conceived in a fashion superior to anything which had been done at this time in Rome. Added to this are certain pronounced details: the elongated forms of the two accompanying figures, the proportions of heads to body being about 1:7, as in Pollaiuolo's paintings and reliefs; the posture of the legs of the first soldier, one being shown in profile while the muscular calf of the other is seen from the front — a position which appears again and again in Pollaiuolo's works (Fig. 3); and, last, the curious hair arrangement of the page who wears a small cap with feathers in the manner found around 1480-90 north of the Alps and also in Venice among the elegant young men such as the ones depicted by the *Master of the Housebook*, by the young Dürer and by Carpaccio. It is true that we occasionally encounter the same hairdress in Umbrian paintings of this period, but never so far as I can perceive in any piece of Roman sculpture. In looking through contemporary Italian sculpture, I found only one other example of this distinctive manner of wearing the hair rolled back on the sides to overlap the ears in flat bunches extending down to the neck — this was the bust of a young Medici which Pollaiuolo executed about 1475-80 now in the National Museum in Florence.

The difficulty with this relief of Malatesta is that if it is Roman, as we believe, it is exceedingly hard to discern the author among the known Roman sculptors of the period. For in the early eighties all of them seem to have disappeared: Bregno was in Siena from 1481-85; Giovanni Dalmata is said to have left Rome for Hungary in 1481; Mino da Fiesole, with whom of course the relief has nothing in common, left Rome for Florence in the same year; Mino del Reame, who is likewise rather far away in style, was no longer in evidence, probably dying about the same time as his contemporary Paolo Romano; even Paolo Antonisio, who is mentioned frequently after the former's death, is not mentioned in documents after 1481. Cristoforo Romano, born about 1465, whom Vasari calls a pupil of Paolo Romano, was an excellent artist but somewhat too tame for the dramatic

character of our relief. Moreover, he was, although he developed very early, too young to have been responsible for the work.

On the other hand, Pollaiuolo could well have been in connection with Sixtus IV, whose tomb he executed after 1484. We do not know for certain when he came to Rome. Vasari says that Sixtus' follower Innocent VIII commissioned Pollaiuolo to work on the tomb; therefore, it is generally accepted that 1484 was the year of his arrival. The last mention in Florence is 1483, but this refers to a payment for which his presence in Florence was not necessary. Sixtus IV, a most worldly and ambitious pope, was exceptionally experienced in art; it is well known that he invited the best Florentine and Umbrian painters, among them Botticelli and Ghirlandaio, to Rome for the decoration of the Sistine chapel between 1480-82. Moreover, he ordered the painters to add details suggesting the victory of Campo Morto in their representations from the Old Testament on the walls of the Sistine chapel. For instance, a portrait of Roberto Malatesta appears in Cosimo Rosselli's *Destruction of Pharaoh*. Among the sculptors who worked for the Sistine chapel were Mino da Fiesole and Giovanni Dalmata. Would Sixtus then not have known of Antonio Pollaiuolo whom Lorenzo de Medici called the greatest of all?

We also know that many of the works executed by Pollaiuolo in his Roman period are lost. After his death (1498) his widow through the Florentine ambassador claimed unpaid bills, some for works done for two cardinals, Benedetto and Ascanio. Ascanio can be identified with Sforza, brother of Lodovico Moro, who had lived at the papal court since 1477 and was very well versed in art matters, having discovered the young Cristoforo Romano whom he recommended to his brother in Milan. While the smoothly executed faces and the ornaments of our relief remind us somewhat of Cristoforo Romano, he certainly could not have been the inventor of the composition. Could Pollaiuolo have provided a drawing from which the sculpture was later executed in a Roman workshop? However, if we place a work by Pollaiuolo next to the Malatesta relief, we might indeed hesitate to say that Pollaiuolo made even the original drawing. For Pollaiuolo had the Florentine nervousness, an almost incredibly intense trembling outline and broken-up form which explodes with physical energy, while there is something steady and even solid in the silhouette of our composition. We find a similar difference in a further comparison with other Florentine representations of equestrian figures; for example, the painted ones of Uccello and Castagno or the Colleoni. Curiously, the horse's gait is the same trot in all the Florentine works; that is,

the left front foot and right hind leg are moving forward, while the gait of the Malatesta horse is more classical and akin to the only other equestrian statue of the Roman Renaissance, that of Antonio Rido (Fig. 2). There the right front foot moves forward corresponding to the forward moving left hind leg. From the point of view of the relief sculptor the position of the horse's legs as we see it in the two Roman reliefs is undoubtedly more appropriate, as it presents hind and front leg as though they formed an archway, clearly in one plane. That the master of our relief knew the Rido monument is indicated from the similar manner of the rider's holding the baton and reins. How differently the baton can be held is apparent in the Florentine equestrian figures from Uccello to Leonardo.

When we consider that the two marble reliefs with equine subjects are separated by about twenty years (Rido died in 1457 and his monument was commissioned by his son), it does not seem impossible that the two pieces could have been made by the same hand. No plausible name has as yet been suggested for the Rido tomb, but I believe it is a work of Giovanni Dalmata because of the ornaments of the frame and the two putti which recur very similarly in Dalmata's tomb of Cardinal Roverella in S. Clemente. That the usually rather lyrically-inclined Dalmata was quite capable of designing temperamental horse figures is proved by the galloping rider in the frame of his last work, the tomb of the blessed Giannelli in Ancona. But if Dalmata was capable of drawing horse and rider, he was still more capable of sculpting the excellent portrait head of Malatesta. We reproduce two marble portrait reliefs by him (Figs. 3 and 4) — of which only the Cynthio has thus far been attributed to him⁹ — which show a close connection in style, especially in the treatment of the eyes, curls, and finely-smoothed surface, with our relief. That both these portraits are Dalmata's is substantiated by the fact that both of the subjects are Hungarians, and that as the favorite of Mathias Corvinus only Dalmata would have been chosen to portray the king and an estimable member of the Hungarian court.

The chief difficulty in attributing the Louvre relief to Dalmata lies in the fact that Dalmata is supposed to have left Rome for Hungary about 1481. However, this date is not more assured than that of Antonio Pollaiuolo's arrival in Rome.

We have then a number of theories regarding the author of the Malatesta tomb, the uncertainty of which explains perhaps the reason why the relief has not been discussed more frequently by students of Renaissance sculpture.

⁹Eric Maclagan, *Burlington Magazine*, 1912.

II

The condottiere Roberto Malatesta was a type of man which only the Renaissance could have produced and immortalized. He was the bastard son of the brutal tyrant of Rimini, Sigismondo Malatesta, who is known to have criminally murdered relatives and friends and to have made of a Christian church a temple of love. Roberto was legitimized as the heir of Rimini by Paul II because the latter hoped he would turn his principality over to the papal state. But Roberto tricked the Pope and, after enlisting Paul's help in the ejection of Sigismondo's wife and children, he kept Rimini for himself; for this he was beleaguered by the pope's army and, defeating it, he was excommunicated. Roberto then allied himself with his neighbor, Frederigo of Urbino, who was likewise in fear of losing his dukedom to the papal state. Isabella, Frederigo's beautiful daughter whom we know from Laurana's bust, was married to Roberto for political reasons. This, however, did not prevent him from forcing Isabella to celebrate publicly with him ten days after their marriage the birth of a son of one of his mistresses, "Dama" Isabetta, daughter of a nobleman from Ravenna, who later presented him with three more children.

Sixtus IV, the follower of Paul II, conceiving another plan to wrest Rimini from Roberto for his favorite nepote Girolamo Riario, who desired it, released the condottiere from excommunication and employed him as general of the papal army against Alfonso, the king of Naples Ferrante, who was on the verge of attacking Rome. Girolamo Riario was disappointed in his hope that Roberto Malatesta would be killed, for the latter won the battle of Campo Morto on August 21, 1482, which indeed liberated Rome from its southern enemies. The battle was bloody and ended with a great loss among the Roman aristocracy on both sides. Roberto returning triumphantly from the battlefield — the subject of the Louvre relief — was received by the Pope and his cardinals at the steps of the Vatican and hailed as the liberator of Rome and the church.

Three weeks later Roberto Malatesta fell seriously ill. He was treated in the palace of one of the cardinals and received the last unction from the hands of Sixtus himself. That he was buried in St. Peter's and a monument erected to him in which he is shown in all his worldly pride, was an ironical if not farcical gesture. For both the Pope and his favorite were relieved by his death, if indeed the latter was not responsible for its actual cause by poison, as many suspected at the time. As for Roberto himself, he could not possibly have been a friend to the pope who had tried all his life to take away his possessions; he merely worked for the pontiff

for personal glory and for the great remuneration he received as condottiere of a mercenary army.

This was not the first time an elaborate tomb had been erected in a Christian church in memory of a notorious condottiere. Bernabo Visconti at the latter part of the 14th century had placed a monument to himself behind the altar of a church in Milan to awe the praying devotees, but in that case some kind of illusion was maintained by the decoration of the base of the monument with religious representations. Nothing of this sort appeared on the condottiere tomb of the Renaissance. Military pomp insolently intruded into the greatest edifice of a religion whose constant was compassion and humility.

We often hear of the golden era of the Renaissance, when the new democratic spirit prevailed in every city. The fact is, however, that it was a period of chaos, and more than fifty city-states in Italy were ruled by petty despots who allowed their subjects little individual freedom. It is true that some of these despots had taste and understanding in art and literature, but let us not forget that excellent artists abounded and it was in the interest and to the glory of the rulers to employ them.

It is characteristic of the point of view of a historian of the period, Macchiavelli, that he called Roberto Malatesta "il magnifico." Magnificent he might have looked indeed in armor and on horseback, with his black eyes, darkly-tanned face, and the expression of physical strength of which his biographers speak. But considering his character and career we would like to reserve this attribute for a man of greater stature.

Rightly is the art of the Renaissance called realistic in contrast to the spiritual of the Middle Ages, but it was not realistic in the sense that it depicted, as it was, the world in which the artist lived. Great art never does. Otherwise, such men as Sigismondo Malatesta or Cesare Borgia would not appear as fascinating human beings, but as monsters in the portraits executed by Piero della Francesca or Leonardo da Vinci. Of course Roberto Malatesta was a very minor figure, but indeed there was little in the lives of most of those men of the Renaissance who have become famous through masterpieces that seems worthy of praise. But the great artists brought out the best in these men or, if it were not there, saw it with the humane eye characteristic of the creative artist. He — whether his conception is realistic or not — cannot help but elevate the subject he touches, because creative action is nature's highest aim, and always carries with it moments of transfiguration which no baseness is ever able to destroy.

III

As a relief connected and subordinated to the wall with a surrounding framework, for so we picture the Louvre relief in its original setting, our Malatesta monument accords with the style of the early Renaissance. This was a continuation of the Medieval concept of sculpture as part of the architecture behind it. Even the sculpture in the round, in this period, cannot yet be imagined without an architectural background. In a wider sense, sculpture was still always relief sculpture. The difference between the medieval relief and the Renaissance relief, as we see it here, is that the latter tries to free itself from the wall to which it is still bound. It did not completely succeed in this effort until the period of the Baroque. But the struggle is implicit: actually and spiritually. Struggle for freedom from the wall is attempted by raising some of the figures to almost complete roundness, by undercutting some of their extremities, and by imbuing them with a movement which seems to break the front plane into pieces. The artist begins to avoid a precise representation of the planes in accordance with the walls and mouldings, which had been characteristic of Medieval art. This avoidance represents one phase of the larger struggle for freedom of the individual from an outside force. In this instance the force was the church, a vast and powerful social institution which was inimical to personal initiative. And symbolic of this force were the church edifice and decorations.

Renaissance sculpture is, therefore, always dynamic, its actors excessive in their movement, pressing forward, filled with physical energy — we think of the greatest works of Donatello and Michelangelo — in contrast to the subdued, reserved and static character of Medieval sculpture. Except in works of artists who still lived in the past, it rarely expresses the deep impersonal devotion of the earlier masters who relinquished their individual desires in favor of a mystic communion with a cosmic being. It is, on the contrary, a fierce battlecry of the individual fighting for himself and his recognition against the cosmic being. This struggle does not need to end in tragedy as in the case of Donatello and Michelangelo. It can be carried on by a buoyant confidence in victory as in the case of other great Renaissance sculptors like Pollaiuolo, Verrocchio, Federighi, Francesco di Giorgio and Leonardo. This belief in victory also filled the hero of our relief, a victory, it is true, not of the spiritual kind, but the actual victory on the battlefield which the Renaissance artist had to glorify again and again in accordance with the hero worship of his time.

An expression of the individualistic tendency of the Renaissance artist is the frame which surrounded our relief and the other tomb reliefs of the period, and without which their characteristics cannot be rightly understood. In communities where individualism is as yet indistinctly recognized — as in some parts of America, in contrast to European countries — people are not accustomed to surround their property with fences; so to artists of epochs in which social and cosmic ideas are ascendant over individualistic and personal ones, the use of frames to separate their works from the outside world is superfluous. The frame was an invention of the Renaissance; neither the Middle Ages nor modern times, whose art is related to Medieval art, have paid much attention to the frame. The reason for this is the feeling that it bars the flow of rhythm from the center of the composition towards the infinite beyond the borders of the painting or sculpture.

The Renaissance artist needed it not only to isolate his individual work from his surroundings, but also, as we see it in our relief, to increase the impression of compact struggle within a small space, hemmed in from all sides. It symbolized, at the same time, the counter movement of the outer world against the individual who struggled to break the chains of social conventions. Michelangelo, who was first of all a sculptor, used the motif of a struggle of the inner composition against the opposing framework frequently in his architecture. That our relief required this strong frame around its energetic and active composition can be seen from a comparison with the tomb relief of Antonio Rido where the movement of the rider is increased through the narrow frame which presses closely against the horse's head, feet and tail.

Finally, let us ask what it is that we enjoy in this Louvre relief which expresses so definitely the Renaissance spirit. Hardly the figure of Roberto Malatesta, who does not deserve the admiration heaped upon him by his contemporaries. Nor can the fact that he was buried in a heroic monument near the entrance of St. Peter, for whose halls his pride and arrogance were singularly inappropriate, beguile us. Nor is there anything elevating in the subject of a victorious leader of a mercenary army who strewed the battlefield with thousands of dead in the interest of a power-loving pope. Yet did we not know the identity of the figure, we would still be carried away by something which inspires us as in like manner do the Gattamelata of Donatello and the Colleoni of Verrocchio. That which gives us enjoyment and inspiration is the expression of an intense energy pushing forward towards unknown goals, of dynamic action which completely animates the

man and his followers, of concentrated vitality which touches the core of our own life.

These life-enhancing qualities are in effect the same as those which radiate from the deeply contemplative works of Medieval artists, whose mystical contents seem opposed to the glorification of active life as we see it here. And yet, perhaps not opposed, for the Renaissance art may rather be a natural continuation of the experience of the ecstatic soul which advances from mysticism to dynamic action. As the philosopher expresses it: "The soul of the great mystic does not come to a halt at the mystical ecstasy as though that were the goal of the journey. The ecstasy may, indeed, be called a state of repose, but it is the repose of a locomotive standing in a station under steam pressure, with its movements continuing as a stationary throbbing while it waits for the moment to make a new leap forward. Henceforward the soul has a superabundance of life; it has an immense *élan*; it has an irresistible thrust which hurls it into vast enterprises . . ."¹⁰

May we not draw a conclusion from the experience of the soul of the individual which applies to nations and civilizations? Just as out of contemplation and mysticism there is born in the individual the *élan* of life and dynamic action, so it appears that epochs of static content in nations and civilizations will be followed by ones of dynamic action. Thus, the most furious explosion of active life, first in the small orbit of the Italian Renaissance, then in the wider circle of European wars and world wars during the expansion of Renaissance ideas in the whole of Europe, appears as a continuation of the high state of the soul in the contemplative epochs of the Middle Ages, to which it will return again after a constantly increasing dynamic activity has reached the point of exhaustion.

¹⁰Bergson, quoted by A. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. III, p. 234. 1945.

SPANISH BAROQUE: A BAROQUE VISION OF REPENTANCE IN EL GRECO'S ST. PETER

By JOSÉ LÓPEZ-REY
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EL GRECO painted several pictures of *St. Peter Repentant*. When the artist died in 1614, there were in his house at least two pictures which were described by his son as *A Weeping St. Peter*.¹ Today over ten paintings of the subject, including studio works, are extant.² Most of these representations are half-length, showing the Apostle gazing upward with tearful eyes, his hands joined in prayer above the keys hanging from his waist — symbols of his pastoral power for the remission of sins and for excommunication. The background is usually the interior of a cave, the wildness of which is rendered by leafy vines about the top. At the Saint's right an entrance to the cave lets in a hilly view in which the figure of Mary Magdalen appears. Carrying the vase of sweet spices in her hand, she is walking down the hill, away from the open tomb of Jesus and the shining figure of the angel.

Thus, the paintings we are referring to embody two different moments of St. Peter's life: one preceding the crucifixion of Christ, and the other following His resurrection. The main theme is, of course, St. Peter's repentance when, after his third denial of Christ, he heard the cock crow and, remembering the words of Jesus, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice," went out of Caiaphas' palace and wept bitterly. The cave which shelters him in El Greco's pictures might be an allusion to St. Peter's third century cult in the Via Appia, *ad Catacumbas*; and if so, it might gratify the Counter-Reformation taste for evoking the faith of the primitive Christians.³

As for the Mary Magdalen in the background, she is obviously depicted at the moment of finding the empty sepulchre after Christ's resurrection. El Greco did not adhere exclusively to any one Gospel. In fact, in representing Mary Magdalen unaccompanied by any other woman, he seems to have followed St. John's narrative, while he probably had in mind St. Mark's or St. Luke's version when he represented the Saint with a vase

¹Francisco de Borja de San Román y Fernández, *El Greco en Toledo*, Madrid, 1910, pp. 193, 194.

²See August L. Mayer, *Dominico Theotocopuli, El Greco, Kritisches und illustriertes Verzeichnis des Gesamtwerkes*, Munich, 1926, nos. 202-211.

³See Joaquín Casaldueiro, *Sentido y forma de "Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda,"* Buenos Aires, 1946, p. 45.

in her hand — a clear reference to the spices she was bringing to anoint the dead body of Christ. St. Matthew's text seems to have prompted the artist's choice of a single angel sitting on the stone removed from the sepulchre. It was this angel who (according to St. Mark, XVI:7) told Mary Magdalen of the Resurrection of Christ, and gave her a message for Peter.

It should be recalled that during the period of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation St. Peter was as bitterly attacked by the Protestants as he was vigorously defended by the Roman Catholics. Each party saw in him a false or a valid symbol of the Papacy to be fought or upheld. For the Protestants, the Apostle Peter was simply the one who denied Christ; for the Roman Catholics, the tears that he shed after his repentance became a symbol of the Confession. The first Pope had set for the Catholics the example of repentance and made forever clear to them that even the predestined — whatever Calvin might say — could sin and yet earn God's forgiveness.⁴

El Greco was one of the first artists to represent *St. Peter Repentant*, and in so doing, he often related the Apostle to Mary Magdalen, in whom also the Counter-Reformation found a symbol of the penance and confession rejected by the reformers. Out of respect for the Biblical texts, the theme of the Penitent Magdalen — which appears by itself in El Greco's work — could not be represented on the same canvas with that of the repentance of St. Peter. The artist could, however, at least bring the two Saints together in the same picture by representing the moment when the Magdalen, filled with fear and great joy, runs to convey to the Apostle the message given to her by the angel. Any hint of anachronism in such a composition would have been dissolved in the Counter-Reformation belief that St. Peter wept over his fault every day of his life. The empty sepulchre, moreover, would suggest the idea of the Resurrection as a foundation for Faith and Hope.

In the Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C., there is one picture of *St. Peter Repentant* by El Greco which differs somewhat from the general type just described. In all probability it was painted around 1600, and may serve, as well as any of the others, to exemplify the artist's rendering of the Counter-Reformation understanding of religious repentance (illustrated).

The Apostle's face is framed by a silver white beard; his eyes, nostrils and lower lip, outlined in vermillion, create a sense of distortion. The half-length figure, wearing a greenish-blue robe under a yellow mantle,

⁴Emile Mâle, *L'Art religieux après le Concile de Trente*, Paris, 1932, pp. 66-67.



EL GRECO: THE REPENTANT PETER
Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.

is set against the brown background of a cave; in the upper corners there are the vivid greens of ivy branches. At Peter's right, the cave opens to a cloudy landscape, where, in the lower part, the Magdalen walks down the hill, carrying in her hand the vase of spices. Neither the sepulchre of Christ, nor His angel is visible in this picture. It might be that they have been cut off from the canvas.⁵ However, it might also be that this figure of Mary Magdalen, though almost identical with those in the other pictures, is to be related to yet another Biblical passage: after rising from the tomb, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalen, out of whom He had cast seven devils, and she went to tell the Apostles, as they were mourning and weeping; but they would not believe her.⁶

In the distance, under soaring clouds, there is the curving line of a shore, and on the water framed by it one can see the tiny shapes of two sailboats. Facing them, a human figure stands on the foreshore. This must be a representation of the third time that Christ showed Himself to His disciples. According to St. John, Peter went fishing with some others of the Apostles in the sea of Tiberias. They failed to catch anything. But when the morning came Jesus stood on the shore and told them to cast their net on the right side of the ship. It was not until they had caught so many fishes that they could not draw in the net, that they recognized the Lord; upon which, Peter cast himself into the sea, while the disciples who were ashore came in a little ship to drag the plentiful net. Then, as if paralleling the thrice-repeated denial, Peter answered affirmatively the thrice-repeated question about his love for Christ. To each answer there followed Christ's charge covering the whole sphere of pastoral duty: "Feed my lambs," "Feed my sheep." This was the moment when, as argued by the Counter-Reformation, Jesus handed the keys of His kingdom to Peter.⁷

The sharp modelling of St. Peter's figure is made up of broad areas of light and shadow; however, even the areas of shadow are permeated with a brilliancy which lights up the whole composition, from the keys in the foreground to the clouds over the distant sea. The shadows on the robe are of a deeper blue; those on the yellow mantle are painted in hues which go from ochre to purple. This particular coloring which I have elsewhere ventured to call "beauteous" color-light,⁸ enhances the texture of the yel-

⁵Mayer (*Op. cit.*, no. 208) suggests that the angel and the sepulchre may have been cut off from the picture, but there is no conclusive evidence in support of his suggestion.

⁶However, St. Luke (XXIV. 34) seems to imply that Jesus showed Himself first to Peter.

⁷For a discussion of the subject, see Fr. Juan Interián de Ayala, *El pintor cristiano, y erudito*, Madrid, 1782 (First Latin edition, 1730), pp. 290-291.

⁸*El Greco's Baroque Light and Form*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," New York, August, 1943, pp. 73-88.

low mantle and the greenish-blue robe, as well as the rich ochre hues of the background and the vivid green on the leaves. Moreover, it shapes with a whitish brilliancy the bluish-gray-robed figure of Mary Magdalen, and makes luminous the clouds, the tiny ships and the figure of Jesus in the background.

Nevertheless, El Greco does not use the green of the leaves, the ochres of the cave, the yellow of the mantle, the greenish-blue of the robe, the yellowish-white of the clouds, or the light on the sails to describe such realities or to translate them into a sensory impression, he has used his beauteous color-light to express the marvel of an ever-changing nature; in his own baroque manner, he enhances and fixes nature's transiency.

Against such a wondrous setting, the figure of St. Peter is placed off-center. His attitude follows a diagonal arrangement. The uplifted head turns, its right side foreshortened, leaving a wider empty space to the Apostle's left. Following the diagonal marked by the motion of the head, two transparent shadows flank the neck and lead to the clasped hands which rest over the heart. Thus the foreshortening of the left arm, the elbow of which comes almost to the picture edge, is emphasized, while, on the other side, the spacious opening of the cave sets off the ample figure. Likewise, the folds of the mantle are more voluminous about the right shoulder and arm, one of them going from the Saint's wrist to his ear. In this way the figure of the Repentant Peter, though ecstatic, seems to be subject to a distorting rhythm — a rhythm which is repeated on the ivy tendrils, the uneven landscape, the ascending clouds and the light-permeated shadows.

The turning motion of the uplifted head places the tearful, sunken eyes at different levels; they seem to peg the foreshortenings on which the distortion of the figure depends. Yet, at the same time, their upward, intent look allows an expression of hope to spread over Peter's torturing grief, a grief deepened by the memories of Jesus' apparitions: the one to Mary Magdalen, whom he, Peter, would not believe; and the last one to him, the sinner, who, though he failed to recognize his Lord immediately, was entrusted with feeding and protecting His flock.

Since parallels between literature and other arts, though perhaps not necessary, may not be as delusory or dangerous as some hold, I may dare to refer at this point to a poetical vision of the Repentant Peter by one of El Greco's contemporaries, the English Jesuit Robert Southwell (1561?-1595) who died a martyr's death. In his poem "St. Peter's Complaint," Southwell depicts the Apostle's grieving over his sin:⁹

⁹Robert Southwell, *The Poetical Works of the Rev.*, Ed. William B. Turnbull, Esq., London, 1856, pp. 9-42.

That eyes with errors may just measure keep,
Most tears I wish, that have most cause to weep.

And, as he realizes that his denial of Christ is a worse crime than those committed by Caiaphas or even Judas, the Apostle, remembering the early morning on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, asks:

Why did the yielding sea, like marble way,
Support a wretch more wavering than the waves?

But, as the Saint's torturing realization of the nature of his sin deepens, his contorted figure acquires a dynamic completion:

My eyes read mournful lessons to my heart,
My heart doth to my thought the grief expound;
My thought the same doth to my tongue impart,
My tongue the message in the ears doth sound;
My ears back to my heart their sorrows send;
Thus circling griefs run round without an end.

Certainly such a circling rhythm of grief can be found in El Greco's plastic rendering of *St. Peter Repentant*. Certainly too, El Greco's contemporaries would find in the Saint's eyes — in which the agonizing motions of the body seem to converge and be quenched — an expression similar to the one explicit in the closing line of the English martyr's poem:

Cancel my debts, sweet Jesu, say Amen!

Such was the prayerful attitude with which the Counter-Reformation reaffirmed the Roman Catholic belief in the confession and remission of sins. And such was the spiritual experience, both sad and joyous, that El Greco, as a baroque artist, embodied in this version of *St. Peter Repentant*.

AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH PORTRAIT: CHARLES FREDERICK ABEL BY GAINSBOROUGH

By WALTER HEIL

De Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco

OF ALL major European nations, the British were the last to develop a national school of painting. While on the continent the art of painting reached supreme heights as early as the fifteenth century, and in Italy even before, it was not until the appearance of Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough, that is, before the middle of the eighteenth century, that one can justly speak of an "English school of painting."

Painting was then produced in England under circumstances quite different from those on the European continent. The Church, so important as a patron of the arts in Catholic countries, played no such role in Protestant England. Nor are the English kings of the eighteenth century, though mildly interested in artistic matters, to be compared to some continental rulers in their employment of the arts as a deliberate means of demonstrating their power and their splendor. In contrast to such artists as Watteau, Boucher or Fragonard, who served primarily a court society with traditionally established manners and tastes, the English painters found their clientele more and more among the affluent merchants who had gained both their wealth and possibly their knighthood only recently in conjunction with the rapid rise of England as a world power. These people were less sure of their taste but also less conventional than the noble continental patrons. As a result the British artists were forced to cater to an insatiable demand for portraits which by far exceeded all other types of painting, of which only landscapes and genre pictures of small dimensions enjoyed a certain measure of popularity. At the same time, they had greater liberty in choosing their individual styles. Some were frankly eclectic, for instance Reynolds, who, a great connoisseur of the arts of the past, avowedly tried to form his own creations from all that he held best in the works of the old masters. Others like Raeburn developed a bold and personal manner of their own.

English portraiture, aside from the obvious function of recording people's likenesses, aimed decidedly at decorative effects. The mansions of the rich, with their well-proportioned, plain panellings, called for large paintings, mostly upright in format. This is one of the reasons for the popularity of full-length portraits, which are rarely encountered on the continent. In the rendering of the sitter's features the British artists were not

so much concerned with grasping individual character as with presenting types: the peer of the realm, the officer resplendent in uniform, the well-born and well-groomed lady, the scholarly reverend, and such. Sweeping composition and pleasing color scheme counted most. No attempt was made to enliven a gentleman's handsome countenance by profound study of his personality or mood, nor unduly to alarm a lady's pretty face by a search into her soul. British portraiture on the whole is derived from that of van Dyck who himself had been instrumental in transforming the earthy and straightforward portrayal practiced by his Flemish predecessors, including Rubens, into a cool and detached presentation of aristocratic elegance. It was van Dyck, too, who introduced the highly representative full-length portrait into England.

Thomas Gainsborough, whose portrait of Charles Frederick Abel serves here as an example of 18th-century portraiture, has all the qualities typical of the English painters with one rather significant exception: He is less academic than nearly all the others, even Raeburn. His style stands out for its personal and unique character. He was a lover of music and nature, a silent poet who, in his landscapes mainly but in his portraits too, was singularly capable of evoking a poetic mood in others. In the constitution of his soul and in his outlook on life, he was perhaps the truest of the great artists that England ever produced.

Thomas Gainsborough was born in 1727 in the village of Sudbury in Suffolk, the son of a small manufacturer of woolen goods. Very little is known about his early life but it seems that his artistic talents manifested themselves very soon. He himself relates in a letter recently discovered that one of his most famous landscapes, the *Wood-Scene, Cornard, Suffolk* in the National Gallery in London, was begun by him at the age of thirteen. The painting as it appears today was actually done — again, according to the artist's own statement — in 1748.

As a mere boy of thirteen or fourteen Gainsborough was sent to London. It seems that for a short time he worked in a silversmith's atelier and then had some training in engraving with the French artist, Hubert Gravelot. From all we can gather, Gainsborough was practically self-taught. While still in London, in 1746, he married a sixteen-year-old girl, Margaret Burr, who was, as has only recently come to light, the illegitimate daughter of a duke and as such received a substantial annuity throughout her life.

Shortly after this marriage Gainsborough went first back to his home town and soon afterwards to the county seat of Ipswich where he estab-



THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH: CHARLES FREDERICK ABEL
Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California

lished himself as a full-fledged painter. Apparently he was fairly successful, painting landscapes and those delightful small portraits, mainly in landscape settings, which are so characteristic of his early manner and have lately found more and more the appreciation which they deserve. Indeed, in their unconventionalized approach and freshness of execution, they belong among the most happy creations of the artist.

Late in 1759 Gainsborough moved to Bath, a watering place particularly fashionable in the eighteenth century with the rich and leisurely society of England. He soon was *en vogue* as a portraitist, with Reynolds virtually his only rival. It was in Bath that he fully evolved the broad and fluid style which is generally associated with his name. At the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 he immediately was made a member.

In 1774 he decided to move to London, settling in a comfortable house on Pall Mall, a proof of the prosperity which he evidently enjoyed. He died in 1788.

Gainsborough was a tall man with a broad, low, somewhat slanting forehead, a strong nose, quick and observing eyes and a sensitive mouth. Unlike Reynolds, he was utterly free from pettiness and social ambition. Although he could have mingled with the highest society of his day had he so desired, he always preferred the company of congenial and true friends — musicians, actors and other professional men. His biographies abound with anecdotes of his great generosity. With his great love for music he combined a curious desire to acquire musical instruments of all types, endeavoring to play them as best he could. He was intelligent far above the average and his letters, though carelessly penned, indicate originality of thought, wit and excellent observation.

As an artist, Gainsborough, though essentially self-taught, received some inspiration from the works of older masters. His early landscapes are reminiscent of such Dutch landscapists as Ruysdael and Wijnants. In his mature portraits he clearly emulates van Dyck, while his late landscapes reveal some influence from Rubens. The timid and tight technique in his early portraiture gives way gradually to the boldly improvising brushwork of his maturity. Likewise in his landscapes, a loosely hatching, impressionistic manner supplants the meticulous rendering of his youth.

Gainsborough's sensitive and responsive nature made him peculiarly suited to portray feminine beauty, so that some of his likenesses of women are rightly counted among his most delightful works. From all evidence Gainsborough needed to be in a certain sympathy with his sitters in order to be at his best. He is known actually to have turned down profitable

commissions if the sitters bored him too much or annoyed him by their behaviour. It is for this reason that among his men's portraits, in particular, we find side by side with works, conventional in design and shallow in interpretation, others which stand out as true masterpieces. One of these is the portrait here discussed. Gainsborough was certainly in sympathy with this sitter, who was one of his best friends.

Charles Frederick Abel, musician and composer, was born in Germany in 1725 and studied at Leipzig, probably under Johann Sebastian Bach. In 1758 he settled in England and was shortly afterwards appointed chamber musician to the queen. He met Gainsborough in Bath and the two maintained a close friendship throughout their lives. He died in London in 1787.

The portrait, probably painted in 1777, was exhibited in the same year at the Royal Academy. It shows the musician in a moment of alert contemplation about to write down what would appear to be a happy musical thought which came to him while improvising on his viola da gamba. The composition is simple and well-balanced, both the bulky instrument and the sleeping dog being skillfully used to solidify its base. The personality of the man is so convincingly presented that we are almost forced to assume that it is a very good likeness. The execution of the painting, in fluid brushstrokes with a most delicate gradation of colors, reveals Gainsborough's mastery at its very height.

Gainsborough started his career as a landscapist. Throughout his life he emphasized in letters to his friends how he hated the drudge of "face painting" and how he longed to go out and paint *landskips*. While many of his portraits so clearly betray the creative joy of the artist that we can hardly take such remarks too seriously, it remains a fact that he kept on painting and drawing landscapes, although he had very little luck in finding buyers for them. Most of them were given away to friends. They, perhaps better than all his other works, reveal the true nature of the artist and man. With a few sketchy strokes he succeeds in rendering all nuances of light and air, the vastness of space and the very fragrance of atmosphere.

It is hard to understand why in Gainsborough's lifetime his landscapes found so little appreciation, although still today, commercially speaking, his portraits rate higher than his landscapes. They lack, perhaps, the decorative glamour which still appeals to many collectors.

History, nevertheless, seems to have justified Gainsborough's inner choice. For, while English portraiture has exerted hardly any influence on the art of other countries, it was the great landscape painting of England, especially that of Constable, who himself acknowledges his indebtedness to Gainsborough, which opened the doors to the new European landscape art of the nineteenth century.



MANET: THE PICNIC
Louvre, Paris

A FRENCH NINETEENTH-CENTURY PAINTING: MANET'S PICNIC

By ROBERT GOLDWATER

Queens College

WHAT single work of art can represent the nineteenth century? In a period which ran the gamut from neo-classicism, through romanticism, realism, and impressionism, to post-impressionism, is there any one work which sums up the qualities of all the rest? When the century opened the artist was intimately connected with his society, cherished by it, asked consciously to create its symbolic image; when the period closed the artist — at least the progressive artist — was an outcast, ignored by the state, scarcely able to sell his production to a few individuals. In the meantime, in the middle of the century, he had recourse to nature and portrayed his intimate contact with it. Under such changing conditions of just what can art be the symbol?

Yet however artificial and falsely fixed the framework of our image there are certain works that fit it, and others that do not. For example, this century, even more than the fifteenth, seems naturally represented by a painting, and not by a building or a piece of sculpture; surely it was both most prolific and most successful in its production of pictures. It is true that we are beginning to re-evaluate the period styles in architecture and no longer consider them entirely devoid of merit, as we did in the first flush of our enthusiasm for twentieth-century functionalism, yet it seems doubtful that any architect of the period will ever be ranked with its greatest painters. Only Rodin comes to mind among the sculptors, and his work, wherever we may place it in a scale of values, so clearly follows the lead of painting in its successive ideals of realism, impressionism and symbolism that it would seem without question to give way to some one creation of these schools. Painting, too, reflects and symbolizes those qualities of isolated, fragmentary experience, of *laissez faire* and rugged individualism which characterized the society of the time and drove the artist, unsupported by either religious or social hierarchy to create out of the material of his own sensations. But beyond this the choice becomes difficult.

Waiving the question of quality, it might be argued that the most typical work of the century, the work that most truly reflects its taste on the one hand and the purpose of its art on the other, would be a product of its schools; that what religious painting was to the baroque in Spain, genre

to the Dutch of the seventeenth century, or the portrait to England of the eighteenth, academy painting was to the nineteenth. Thus Meissonier or Bouguereau, Israels or Menzel, Frith or Watts, have in them that sentimentality and love of anecdote, that interest in exact rendering of detail watered down by the memory of past styles, that tendency toward striking effect with which to catch the eye from afar that was the most sought-after style of the time. Surely one of them would have been picked by the period to symbolize itself, and in a sense the period would have been correct. For these men accepted unequivocally the conditions which their society gave them to work in. They were completely within its context and produced art that was its result. They were successful and admired because they were expressing not themselves, after the manner of the progressive painters, but the artistic ideals of their environment. In this sociological, almost statistical sense, the Academy picture might be made the symbol of the century. But only in this limited sense. For the struggle that the Academy painter either abandoned or did not conceive, the very sense of individuality which he possessed in an external sense only, this also was part of the century's character. This the progressive artist knew, even if not consciously, and it is the paradox of the time that the greater the artist's isolation, the greater his understanding, and the more acute his awareness of a direct relation to nature — an ideal which men like Bouguereau professed while actually always seeing her in the mirror of a pallid eclecticism.

But no completely satisfying choice can be made from among the non-academic painters. As has been said, no one artist, let alone any one picture, can sum up a century so full of change, and so filled with rich and individual personalities. The styles which follow one another so quickly are not really group styles. Apart from impressionism, which for perhaps nearly a decade created a manner truly common to a number of outstanding artists, each of the movements of the century is really contained within the oeuvre of one man. Delacroix is the one romantic, Courbet the one realist, Seurat the one neo-impressionist.

If the *Picnic* (or the *Luncheon on the Grass*) has been chosen as the symbol of the century it is because, famous in itself (or notorious), it is, as it were, a turning point, the work of a man who belonged in no precise fashion to any one school, and because the picture (like the sum of his work) is a link between the first part of the century and its end. The *Picnic* is an obvious choice for many reasons, and this suggests that it is perhaps the best choice possible, since the attention that has been focussed upon it

must in some measure be due to typical qualities contained in outstanding fashion, or at least to the presence, if not the solution, of the problems common to many of the painters of the last century.

The picture's reception is of course characteristic of that split between the artist and his public that had begun with Delacroix (if not already with Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*), and was to grow in aggravation as the century progressed. Its initial rejection, its notoriety at the *Salon des Refusés* called for the artist's bafflement and the public's and the critics' contemptuous humor, phenomena so common that today we are almost suspicious of understanding and success. Manet is often criticized because he was quite open in his pursuit of official recognition, and because with the help of external aids he largely succeeded where others failed. But he was exceptional only in possessing those social *atouts* of grace and property that made success possible. Others desired it as ardently as he, and like Delacroix and Renoir, used the means at their disposal to obtain it. They played the game according to the rules of the Academy. Not until the twentieth century does the progressive artist accept his break with the juries and the Schools and look for recognition elsewhere than in the official Salons. On the other hand the *Salon des Refusés*, of which the *Picnic* was the *clou*, presaged the break that was to come toward the end of the century with the founding of the Independents in opposition to the Academy exhibitions. But if Manet, in 1867, followed Courbet's example in opening his own exhibition at the Pont de l'Alma he did so only with reluctance. As soon as he was granted admittance he returned through the official gates.

The manner of its composition, too, shows the *Picnic* as a link between past and future. Manet's dependence upon the idea of Giorgione and the figure arrangement of Raphael was quite open and acknowledged, and called forth comment (but not censure) from at least one critic of the period. In this Manet belonged to the past, where such dependence was an accepted trade practice, and to the first part of his own century. Was not Delacroix directly inspired by Rubens in his *Justice of Trajan*; did not Ingres borrow with pride from Raphael (and elsewhere!), claiming indeed that he was the most himself when he was closest to his master. Only somewhat later, after Courbet's insistence upon the artist's personal knowledge of his theme, and the impressionists' emphasis upon direct sensation, was there objection made to the painter's use of such obvious links with artistic tradition. But this picture was painted in the year of Delacroix's death and while Ingres was still working.

It is Manet's approach to his inherited composition that most reveals how typical he is of his century. For in the actual process of painting he forgets tradition, and relies solely upon his own sensation, painting what he sees. Yet what he "sees" has two aspects, and it is in their union that he joins the two parts of the century. He is on the one hand the realist, willing to paint only what he has before him, seeing his objects with an eye unbiased by pictorial custom or good taste. For tone and color he is like the impressionists, willing to work only from nature, though unlike them he puts together elements not observed simultaneously. But like his great romantic predecessors, Manet does not insist that nature shall be painted only with the means of nature. Like Delacroix he falsifies to appear true. Thus in a highly artificial fashion (but he would have insisted that art is a self-conscious artifact), Manet here unites the older tradition of painting with that reliance upon objective observation and subjective individualistic sensation that characterizes his immediate successors. His very theme, for a while so notorious, now so ignored, indicates how much he comes from the past, how much he looks toward the future. In a *tour de force* he combined a classical *invenzione* (not his own to be sure), a genre theme, a nude studied out of doors, and a landscape. No other painter of the century managed to get so much into one canvas. If Manet achieved their union, it was paradoxically none of these things that really interested him; standing apart from them he could fuse them through his only real passion — pure painting.

EARLY AMERICAN PAINTING: STUART'S FULL-LENGTHS OF WASHINGTON

By JAMES THOMAS FLEXNER
Clintonville, Connecticut

THE most widely-accepted popular symbols created by an important American painter are Stuart's likenesses of Washington. Most grandiloquent of these are the full-length portraits known as the Lansdowne type. Even during the artist's lifetime they took on a mythological significance. Stuart always insisted that the full-length of Washington that adorned the White House was a forgery, but this did not destroy its magical aura, as is shown by the care that was taken to save the picture when the English took the capital in 1814. As she fled, Dolly Madison, the president's wife, commanded a servant to save or destroy "the portrait of President Washington, the eagles which ornament the drawing room, and the four cases of papers which you will find in the President's private room. The portrait I am very anxious to save, as it is the only original by Stuart. In all events, don't let them fall into the hands of the enemy, as their capture would enable them to make a great flourish."

Today, more than a century later, the full-lengths still occupy their peculiar nitch. During 1946, the Brooklyn Museum bought a Lansdowne type Washington for a reported price of \$70,000; the picture was unveiled at an impressive evening reception; and shortly thereafter the New York subway system posted notices urging straphangers to visit the picture. The accompanying drawing of a comic little figure shaking hands with the image Stuart had painted was a logical continuation of an aristocratic myth into more democratic times.

Although they have been major purchases of major museums, although they hang in prominent positions in institutions devoted to art, the Lansdowne Washingtons are from an esthetic point of view among the worst pictures Stuart ever painted. He was unable to do them well because they represented a recession from his own social and artistic ideals. Almost every aspect of their composition, he would have mocked in the work of someone else. Indeed, a similarly conceived portrait of Napoleon by David drew from Stuart the comment, "How delicately the lace is drawn! Did one ever see richer satin! The ermine is wonderful in its finish. And, by Jove, the thing has a head!"

Stuart's full-lengths of Washington were a hangover from old-fashioned forms. In the times which modern princes, between their marriages to

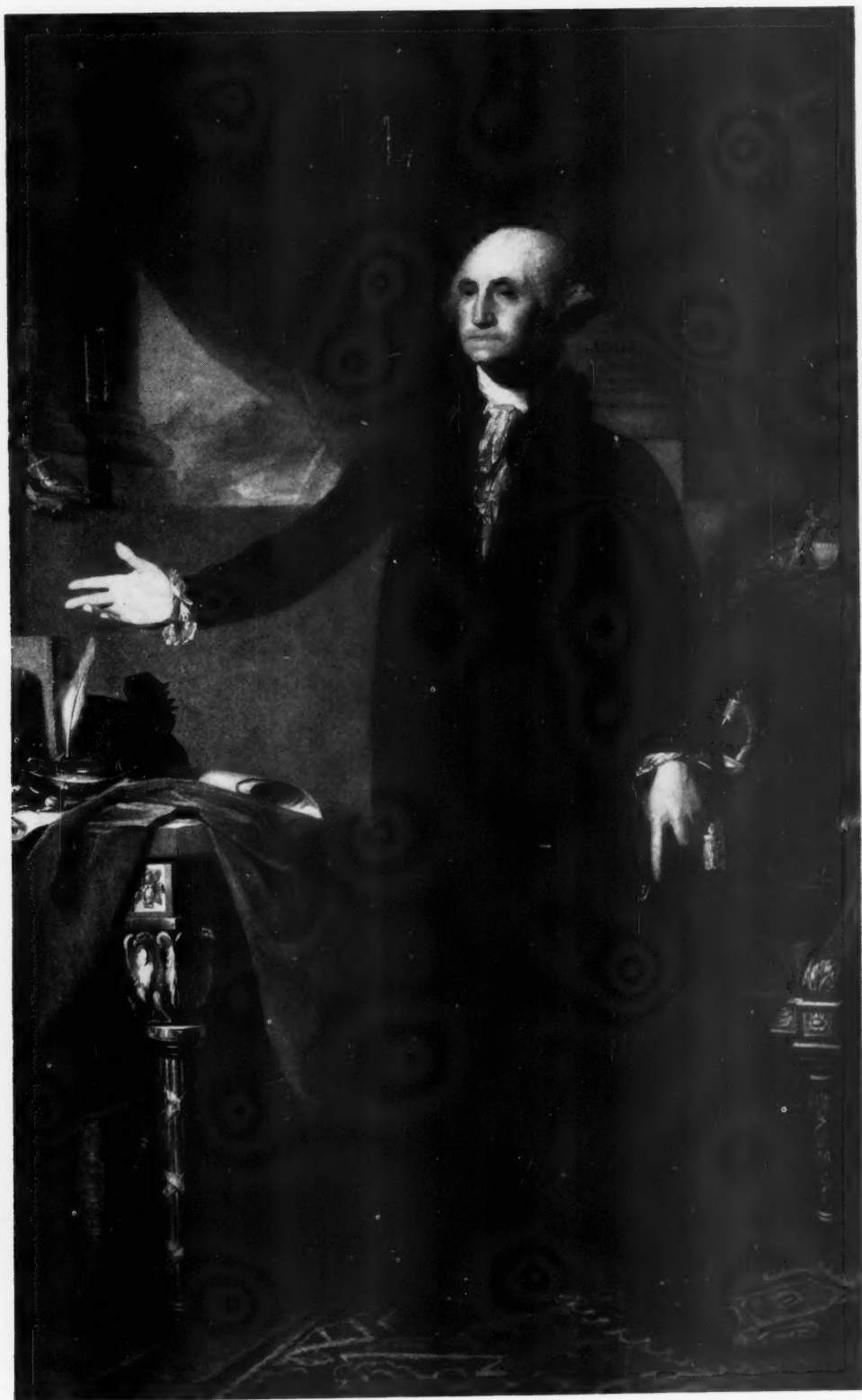
heiresses and movie actresses, mourn as the good old days, the most important thing about a man was in what bed he had been born. If he was reputed to have had the right sire, he was great no matter what was his personality and appearance. Portraitists, recognizing this, painted people not as individuals but as representatives of social classes. Those things that characterized the rich and noble were emphasized: elegant furniture and interior decoration; fine and expensive clothes; poses that expressed command or grace. As for faces, painters were careful to avoid double chins or receding foreheads. They smoothed out individuality, producing handsome symbols of rank.

Stuart was a birthright member of another world. The son of an artisan, he was born in Rhode Island during 1755; he belonged to the generation that fought the revolution. True, his Scotch-born parents were Tories, and, just as the fighting started, he left America to study and paint in London. His ideas never expressed themselves in political action, yet Stuart was within his own chosen field a radical. That he shunned military barricades, did not keep him from leading the intellectual charge. Although he never shot a minion of the aristocrats, he painted many an aristocrat as a fool.

Stuart's whole artistic career was sparked by revolt against such pictures as his full-lengths of Washington. He fought to remove from likenesses the elements which aristocratic painters most desired. He had no interest in the achievements of a man's tailor or his dancing master or his interior decorator: "You cannot be too careful," he told his pupils, "in putting down the animal you see before you." He liked to paint faces against plain backgrounds that told nothing of the sitter's class or origin. He made ladies wash off the rouge with which they had armed themselves for their sittings; gentlemen, if they wished to be painted by Stuart, had to disarrange carefully parted hair and elaborately fixed costumes. The artist wished to paint people as they actually were, and, if they objected, he simply refused to go on with the picture. When criticized for not having shown as beautiful a homely society matron, Stuart cried, "What damned business is this of a portrait painter! You bring him a potato and expect he will paint a peach."

Stuart's interest in character for its own sake was as revolutionary as any idea of Jefferson's. If a man of the people can be depicted as more intellectual, more admirable than a lord, what happens to special privilege?

Having fought for his ideas in London, Dublin, and New York, Stuart moved in 1795 to Philadelphia with the idea of painting President Washington. He found that the society of the national capital was dominated



GILBERT STUART: GEORGE WASHINGTON
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

by patricians who had regarded the revolution as a disagreement between the upper classes of England and America. While the Federalists passed laws to nurture a ruling American class, the civil powers of Philadelphia labored to establish an imitation royal court, where they could play the parts of lords and ladies. The society beauties and their husbands knew that Jefferson's equalitarian ideas had been inspired by the devil.

Stuart took part in the gay parties with which the capital abounded, but he found it hard to get on with his self-consciously aristocratic compatriots. When John Adams, who wished to award titles to the American millionaires, condescended to him, he refused to finish Adams' portrait. After an argument with General Knox, the Secretary of War, he used Knox's picture as a door for his pig-sty. He quarreled with that light of American society, Napoleon's brother, Jerome Bonaparte. Years later, Thomas Sully stepped in Stuart's attic on the half-completed canvas of the erstwhile King of Naples. "You needn't mind," said Stuart, "it's only a damned French barber."

Washington, the aging soldier who had never wanted to be president, was bewildered by the swirling social controversies of his capital. Although he was a very rich man who had been brought up as an aristocrat, he wanted to be everyone's president; he tried to make the leaders of the left and right — Jefferson and Hamilton — serve amicably in the same cabinet, and he was very sad when they quarreled. He indignantly spurned subtle suggestions that he accept a crown, but he allowed himself to be saddled with a court chamberlain who kept ordinary people from his presence. Stuart painted likenesses of Washington symbolic of both sides of the struggle in which artist, sitter, and their whole generation were engaged.

Of the three life portraits by Stuart, the first and the third, the Vaughan and the Athenaeum portraits, were painted in accordance with democratic conceptions. Only a head and shoulders are shown; in the Athenaeum portrait, the most famous of all, Stuart did not even complete the background. Interest is concentrated on the features and the character of the man; there is no exterior symbol here to demonstrate that the sitter was a ruler not a merchant or ship's captain. If we are impressed, it is not by any temporal trappings, but by the personality shown.

The rich and powerful of Philadelphia clamored for a likeness more suited to their royalistic leanings. William Bingham, a local millionaire whose beautiful and competent wife was "the uncrowned Queen of the Federalist court," commissioned a full-length of Washington as a gift for the high-born English Whig, the Marquis of Lansdowne. Always in finan-

cial straits, Stuart accepted the commission as a potential money-maker. He hoped to use an engraving after the picture "to rescue myself from pecuniary embarrassment and to provide for a numerous family at the close of an anxious life."

At heart, Stuart felt that such heroic full-lengths as he was now going to attempt were silly. Combining his memory of pictures he despised with imported engravings which he thought of as trash, he worked out a composition containing a vastly over-elegant chair that bore the seal of the United States; the heavily carved leg of an equally elegant table; richly bound books; three fat marble columns; a completely irrelevant mulberry curtain with gold cords; and a sunset sky embellished with a rainbow. Artists cannot make successes out of pictures in which they do not believe. Stuart soon got hopelessly entangled in his borrowed gee-gaws.

Furthermore, he found it impossible to stick to the style in which he was supposed to be working. Canova presented the diminutive Napoleon with the body of a Greek athlete, but Stuart noticed that Washington's "shoulders were high and narrow; his hands and feet remarkably large. He had aldermanic proportions, and this defect was increased by the form of the vest of that day." Stuart recorded these facts, although such truthfulness was completely out of keeping with the heroic conception of the picture.

When he stood for Stuart, Washington had just bought a new set of false teeth that fitted him so badly they disfigured his mouth; he wore them only a short time, but this was the time of the Lansdowne portrait. Certainly Stuart would have been justified in painting out this defect which was temporary and which revealed more about Washington's dentist than his character. Stuart mourned the disfigurement to his friends, but repeated it exactly in his picture. All the fanciness of the conception he had borrowed from aristocratic painters, could not keep him, when he got to the part of the composition that interested him — the representation of the face — from putting down what he saw with the realism of a modern historian.

Stuart's Lansdowne Washingtons — he made many copies of the original — are among the most confused pictures ever created by a major artist. However much they damage the picture esthetically, the contradictions are of fascinating interest to the art historian who is concerned with meanings, with the relation of a picture to the thought of its time. In his *Golden Bough*, Frazer found the whole world-wide history of magic involved in the explanation of one local rite. In the same way, Stuart's Washingtons have implicit within them the whole struggle between Federalist and Jeffersonian America.



CENTRAL BUILDING OF RADIO CITY, NEW YORK

Photograph Courtesy of Thomas Airways

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE: THE CENTRAL BUILDING OF RADIO CITY

By JOSEPH HUDNUT
Harvard University

FOUR characteristic trends in contemporary American architecture are clearly exhibited in the high Central Building of Radio City. These are:

- (a) The progressive mechanization of architecture.
- (b) The acceptance of function as the basis of architectural expression.
- (c) The estrangement between architecture and the decorative arts of painting and sculpture.
- (d) The integration of architecture with the science of community planning.

THE MECHANIZATION OF ARCHITECTURE. The complexity and variety of mechanical installations have developed so rapidly in our day, and have assumed so important a place in our lives, as to become one of the determining factors in the patterns of architecture.

Not long ago architects designed their buildings with little care for the operating facilities which were to be built into them. The pipes, wires and vents which were essential to plumbing, heating and artificial lighting could be threaded through the completed structure with a minimum adjustment of column and girder. Such improvidence is scarcely possible today when systems of electricity, heat, air-conditioning and mechanical communications often comprise a full third of the total volume — and of the total cost — of a building. The architect must mould his structure to the obstinate demands of our mechanical servants.

When in 1852 Otis amused the visitors to his Yonkers workshop with a device called an *elevator* which could lift them from floor to floor, few imagined that that unassuming machine would shatter the long-established principles of academic architecture. Architects made use of the invention to stretch a Renaissance palace into the clouds unaware that the palace could not long endure that enemy at its heart.

The architects of Radio City designed their elevators first. The great central building is wrapped about a core of elevators; these, together with the vast systems of the arteries for water, air and sound, determine in large

measure the disposition of wall and window, the shape and proportion of exterior mass. The elevator has destroyed the palace.

FUNCTION AS THE BASIS OF ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION. We have developed recently a very special way of looking at buildings. Our habit of vision includes not the outward aspects of buildings merely but their organisms: the disposition and energies of their structure, the use and ordering of enclosed space, the pressures and resistances of the life which flows through and around them.

I do not imply that this mode of apprehension is wholly new; the pyramids, I suppose, were known in ancient Egypt both as tomb and geometric pattern; but I think that, as a people, we are — at those rare moments • when we observe buildings — more interested in whatever order may be imposed on buildings by use and activity than we are in appearances formalized from without. Buildings exist in our consciousness as instruments rather than objects and are more akin to the world of biology than to that of physics. They are live creatures.

A skyscraper is a vertical thoroughfare: a thoroughfare which draws a selected traffic from the street and returns it to the street. As our streets progress towards the city's heart they stem upwards in vertical branches ever more closely spaced; their currents flow in and out of these branches; the street becomes a tree having skyscrapers for its boughs.

Around a central system of traffic lanes the architects of the R. C. A. Building built a steel cage, a cage endlessly divided into uniform compartments. A scaffolding composed of a thousand uniform cells is raised around a cluster of elevator shafts. The scaffolding is rigid, metallic, and lightly enclosed by thin walls.

The energy of this structure could not be apprehended as that of stone laid on stone, of solid arches pushing against each other. We understand the building as a frame which defines and sets apart from cosmic space a great block of useful space; as vast stratifications of space rising upward into shelf after shelf of activity and interest.

The R. C. A. Building does not willingly assume so prosaic a place in our consciousness. It retains something of that monumental quality — solid, inert and solemnly dignified — to which its ancestors pretended. There are in it strange recollections of the cathedral tower: the lithic envelope, the clean ascending lines, the planes set back towards the center as they rise, the cavernous doorway incrustated with colored sculptures. It is in the evening that it reveals its modernity. Then, when the surfaces of stone

become dark curtains pierced with a million squares of light, the monument confesses itself a metallic cage; then it proclaims its relevance to our present and genuine culture, a culture not congenial to monuments.

That relevance, I think, confers a strange grandeur on this unromantic building. The huge fabric, thus asserting in the night its true character so clearly relevant to our way of life and to the terms of our manufacture, persuades us of a new splendor and power which is coming into the world. We acknowledge, not without pleasure, a harmony with the thought and practice of our time.

THE ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND THE DECORATIVE ARTS. In our time the art of architecture has become curiously divorced from the arts of decoration. The trimmings of column and arch, of statue and pinnacle and picture, which delighted us yesterday are today found to be intolerable. We must have unshadowed surfaces, unbroken silhouettes, relationships of mass and volume inexorably asserted.

In part this preference is the natural consequence of our mechanizations and our interest in functional form. People who really care about machines do not as a rule wish to obscure their operation with ornament; and — in spite of the successes of our milliners — it is difficult to decorate successfully a biological creature.

It has been suggested that our Spartan taste has its origin in a search for a pure architecture, an architecture having no other resource than that of patterns constructed in space. I know that such an objective inspired the baroque architecture of Le Corbusier; it is nevertheless wholly inconsistent with the principle of functionalism.

The notion that we can create a pure architecture is, of course, absurd; but if the primary interest of our architects is indeed in expressive form, I should suppose that they would especially welcome the partnership of those contemporary painters and sculptors whose materials are also abstractions. Makers of patterns, they would wish to extend and enliven their music with those rhythms which in more human terms reaffirm the meanings of architecture.

I applaud the architects of Radio City for their gallant attempt to bring about this reconciliation, so necessary to the health of architecture. It is not their fault if they were in part unsuccessful. Nor would I blame too severely the sculptors and painters. Dealers in self-expression, they could not be expected to develop over night an art oriented to an architecture in which self-expression is the least pardonable of vices.

The sculptures of Lachaise would be excellent if they had not been hung on a steel frame; and even those of the great eastern doorway would be tolerable had the artist not conceived his design as a cave cut into the base of a cliff. There is no cliff — only the appearance of one — and the harmony of sculpture and architecture is the shallow harmony of unreal appearances. That is, to say the least, especially unfortunate in a building whose chief claim to beauty lies in organic truth.

ARCHITECTURE AND CITY PLANNING. A tendency which is certain to transform profoundly our architecture, and our judgments of architecture, is the tendency to apprehend buildings as elements in civic design.

Like St. Paul's in London or the Campanile in Venice, the R. C. A. Building stands amid a concert of buildings to which it is center and climax. Theatres and office buildings, shops and garages, terraces, sunken gardens and the city streets, acknowledge its presidency and reflect upon it the breadth and importance of a city.

I am not so much impressed by the fact that a city could thus be conceived and built — dramatic as that may be — as by the fact that so vast a project should be governed by an architectural idea. Not one building, but many, were guided by that ancient need for pattern and order in our environment, that need which is the true and universal source of architecture. I commend Radio City to those pragmatic-minded persons who think that city planning is a matter of traffic management and the distribution of housing projects.

